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Freud and the Tragic Virtues

WALTER KAUFMANN

FREUD, EVEN MORE THAN LINCOLN, might well be called the Great Emancipator. Like no man before him, he lent substance to the notion that all men are brothers. Criminals and madmen are not devils in disguise, but men and women who have problems similar to our own; and there, but for one experience or another, go you and I.

Without any wish to do so, Freud also confirmed many millions in the comfortable notion that the great are really no different from the small; indeed, that there are no great men. To be sure, there are great scientists and people who achieve great things. Ideas, theories and engineering feats are readily called great; discoveries and exploits—successes, in one word—are great; but human beings are supposed to be essentially alike, and it is considered unsophisticated and undemocratic to suppose that a man, instead of merely *doing* something great, *is* great, regardless of success or failure.

A hundred and fifty years ago, Hegel, the philosopher, and Goethe, the poet, remarked that no man is a hero to his valet—not because there are no heroes, but because valets are valets. Now that few valets are left and the intimate failings of men of distinction have become the business of the psychoanalysts, one may well ask whether this quip fits *them*, or whether there really are no heroes.

Freud himself believed in great men. But before considering his attitude, it may be well to lend more substance to the notion

WALTER KAUFMANN, an associate professor of philosophy at Princeton University, is the author of *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* and *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, and editor of *The Portable Nietzsche* and *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*.

This article is from Mr. Kaufmann's forthcoming book, *The Faith of a Heretic*, to be published next year by Doubleday.

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of the human being who is great apart from any success—in fact, great in failure. There is a form of literature that is specifically dedicated to such greatness: tragedy. Tragic heroes fail by definition, but the tragedy depends on the conviction that the hero in his failure is still—indeed, more than ever—nobler than the rest of us. In Shakespeare's two greatest tragedies, *Hamlet* and *Lear*, the hero neither has done nor does anything that raises him above most men; and yet there is somehow the presumption, quite unwarranted by their accomplishments, that Lear and Hamlet *are* superior, particularly when they are about to die.

English literature since Shakespeare has been a variety of escapes from tragedy. For three hundred years after Shakespeare, not a single great tragedy was written in English. The major poets shut their eyes to the terrors of existence and took refuge in contrivance: the metaphysical poets contrived "conceits," and Milton, Blake and Yeats, mythologies. One did not make a fuss about one's pains—not until the romantics came along and contrived a special language for such themes, worlds removed from the spontaneous power of Shakespearean outbursts of emotion.

Shakespeare had no heirs in England. His wit, which suggests the writer's emergence from the abyss rather than an escape from the brink, was taken up by Goethe and Heine, by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and by Gide. In British literature, wit became cleverness and part of the refusal to dwell on the tragic. One knows those things exist, but one doesn't make a point of them.

In the United States one did not have to be quite so genteel during the first hundred years, but there was no stage. Melville's Captain Ahab is a tragic hero even so, and the influence of Shakespeare is writ large all over *Moby Dick*. Again, the author's feeling for his hero is not warranted by any great accomplishment but lavished on a character who is outstanding in his uncompromising courage, his defiant obstinacy and his proud contempt for popularity.

It is not the fault of the psychologists that many college teachers are no longer sure that Ahab is the hero of the book—he lacks love, and some teachers are not comfortable in his presence—and some critics even argue that the fact that Ishmael survives may

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show that he, having learned love, is the real hero. By the same token, Hamlet may yet be dismissed, and Horatio may be called the real hero.

It is partly the American infatuation with success that stands in the way of our having tragedies. It is well known that the Puritans closed the British theaters; it is less well understood that Calvin's ethos dealt tragedy a much more lasting blow by preaching success and lack of sympathy for failure. Our whole attitude toward greatness, our view of man, and our moral outlook have become quite different since Shakespeare's time—even since Freud's.

Freud still had a sense for tragedy and admired nobility far above success. Late in life, he wrote, in a letter to Arnold Zweig, the novelist, speaking of Nietzsche: "In my youth he signified a nobility which I could not attain. A friend of mine, Dr. Paneth, had got to know him . . . and he used to write me a lot about him." As it happens, we know what Paneth wrote his fiancée about Nietzsche, and we have no reason for doubting that it was the following sort of thing that struck Freud as inimitably noble:

"There is not a trace of false pathos or the prophet's pose in him, as I had rather feared after his last work [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*]. Instead his manner is completely inoffensive and natural. . . . He told me, but without the least affectation or conceit, that he always felt himself to have a task and that now, as far as his eyes [half-blind] would permit it, he wanted to get out of himself and work up whatever might be in him. . . . He told me that through his physical pains [which were almost constant] he had got rid of his pessimism—from defiance, in order not to let himself be tyrannized by pain. . . . There are many contradictions in Nietzsche, but he is a thoroughly honest human being, full of the most powerful strength of will and striving. . . . He is completely convinced of his mission and of his decisive importance. In this faith he is strong and superior to all misfortune, physical suffering, and poverty. Such a contempt for all instruments of success, such freedom from all that smacks of cliques and advertising, is impressive."

Early in 1884, when these letters were written and Freud, then

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in his twenties, thrilled to Nietzsche's unattainable nobility, Nietzsche was in no sense whatsoever a success. Pleading his ill health, he had resigned his professorship at Basel, Switzerland, while still in his thirties, and he was publishing a book a year without creating any stir at all.

Much later, long after Nietzsche's death, Freud, according to Ernest Jones's biography, "several times said of Nietzsche that he had a more penetrating knowledge of himself than any other man who ever lived or was ever likely to live." Freud also remarked in print that Nietzsche's "premonitions and insights often agree in the most amazing manner with the laborious results of psychoanalysis." He immediately added: "I have long avoided him for this very reason. After all, I was less concerned about any priority than about the preservation of my open-mindedness." But the image of Nietzsche evoked in Dr. Paneth's letters seems to have exerted a formative influence on the young Freud, who soon developed the same qualities.

Freud, like Nietzsche, defied the indifference, hostility and smug complacency of those who ridiculed him or ignored him without reading him. Both also defied a rarely rivaled crescendo of agonies, devoting themselves to their work as long as any strength at all was left them. They prized courage above pleasure, honesty above popularity, and integrity above success. Neither of them expected or desired the least reward. There was something stoic about both of them, especially about their attitude toward pain; but on occasion both displayed the passion of the prophets, and Nietzsche's modesty and never failing kindness in his personal relations with the simple people among whom he lived in Switzerland and Italy while writing, his vitriolic wit, and Freud's usually less acid humor and his warm affection for his children and grandchildren are remote from stoicism.

Biographies of Freud are now beginning to abound. Even if it were only on account of its massive documentation, Ernest Jones's three-volume *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* would dominate the field. Moreover, Jones, until his recent death the dean of British psychoanalysts, was very close to Freud for over thirty years before he saved Freud's life in 1938 by getting him

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out of Austria soon after the Nazis entered Vienna. Based on intimate knowledge of Freud's personality, his works, his letters, unpublished material and the whole literature about him, Jones's work is unquestionably our best source for Freud's life and character.

Jones's psychoanalytic interpretations of Freud's character are, ironically, the feeblest part of his work. When he tries to explain Freud's genius at the end of Volume 2, he becomes ridiculous:

"There was his half-brother Philipp . . . whom he suspected of being his mother's mate and whom he tearfully begged not to make his mother again pregnant. Could one trust such a man, who evidently knew all the secrets, to tell the truth about them? It would be a curious trick of fate if this insignificant little man—he is said to have ended up as a peddler—has through his mere existence proved to have fortuitously struck the spark that lit the future Freud's determination to trust himself alone, to resist the impulse to believe in others more than in himself, and in that way to make imperishable the name of Freud."

Thus ends Volume 2. But when Jones forgets about such attempts at explanation and records the story of Freud's sixteen years of cancer, how he suffered thirty-three facial operations, was in almost constant pain, but worked, remaining dedicated and humane until the end, and when Jones quotes Freud's own remarks and letters, then we feel that we are face to face with greatness. No success could possibly command as much respect as the old seeker's fortitude and honesty, his mixture of humility and pride, his contempt for "the hubbub on all sides of a popularity that I find repellent," and the unique way in which he blended heroism and nobility with warmth and humor. If all his theories were wrong, one feels, he would still be one of the great men of all time, one of the few who made themselves into enduring images of humanity.

Oddly perhaps, Freud's greatness emerges most clearly when the attitude of his biographer is, as it were, pre-Freudian. Unquestionably, one way of communicating greatness is to let a man's life, actions and words speak for themselves, resisting any impulse to explain.

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A fine example of an effort of this sort is Norman Malcolm's *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir.* Wittgenstein (1889-1951) was one of the most influential philosophers of modern times and the man chiefly responsible for what has recently been called a "revolution in philosophy." Indeed, he had something to do with two revolutions in philosophy, seeing that he influenced the so-called Vienna Circle of the original Logical Positivists after World War I, and then, later, the development of analytic philosophy or, as it is often called, "ordinary language philosophy" which, after World War II, spread from Cambridge and Oxford to the United States. His pupil and first successor to his chair at Cambridge, Georg Henrik von Wright, says in his "Biographical Sketch," which prefaces Malcolm's memoir: "It is probably true that he lived on the border of mental illness. A fear of being driven across it followed him throughout his life." But neither he nor Malcolm tries his hand at amateur psychology. Both consider Wittgenstein a hero and let the facts and some of his remarks in conversation and some of his letters speak for themselves.

There is no effort to omit what might put Wittgenstein into a dubious light. Malcolm tells of the man whom he remembers—a man who was not comfortable company, a man much too intense for comfort, a man sometimes clearly in the wrong—a man who struck the writer as more memorable, noble, haunting than the other men and women he has met. Without any attempt at explanation, he allows us to encounter a great man.

This, it may be objected, is a pre-Freudian approach, now dated and no longer honest. We today, it may be said, cannot in candor stop short with a mere description. Freud himself, to be sure, might not have agreed with this objection. In the very letter in which he told Arnold Zweig how Nietzsche had once signified for him "a nobility which I could not attain" (Jones, III, 459f.), Freud expresses serious doubts about Zweig's plan to write a book on Nietzsche and, in general, about the possibility of reconstructing and unraveling his psychical processes and motives. But perhaps we must at this point go beyond Freud, taking full advantage of his work and that of his successors.

That is the aim of Erich Fromm, one of America's most popu-

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lar psychoanalysts and social psychologists, both in his earlier, more scholarly books and in his recent tracts *The Art of Loving* and *Sigmund Freud's Mission*. Fromm certainly is a master of titles, but these two book titles are a bit misleading, and the central aim of the second book is really to "explain" Freud by laying bare, as Fromm says on the first page, "the driving forces in him which made him act, think and feel in the particular way he did." In ten chapters of about ten pages each, Fromm, with confident assurance, reveals all—or all that fits his theses.

Like many another critic of Freud, Fromm argues that the master was a little simple-minded, that he tried mistakenly to explain everything in terms of sex, and that he overlooked the vast importance of cultural differences. We gather that in our time and culture, sex and other such unedifying matters are not so important as the master thought, and that what we today need is some good, old-fashioned preaching—for example, on *The Art of Loving*.

Nietzsche, to whom the early Fromm owed a great deal, said in his *Genealogy of Morals*—and Freud would surely have agreed whole-heartedly:

"Why stroke the hypersensitive ears of our modern weaklings? Why yield even a single step . . . to the Tartuffery of words? For us psychologists that would involve a Tartuffery of *action*. . . . For a psychologist today shows his good taste (others may say his integrity) in this, if in anything, that he resists the shamefully *moralized* manner of speaking which makes all modern judgments about men and things slimy."

This quotation throws much more light on Freud's attitude toward Jung and Adler and some other men who broke with him, and toward Breuer, with whom he broke, than does Fromm's claim that Freud's "pride made him repress the awareness of dependency and negate it completely by breaking off the friendship when the friend failed in the complete fulfillment of the motherly role." In this context, Fromm, who had been harsh on Jung to the point of unfairness in a previous book (*Psychoanalysis and Religion*), soft-pedals his own objections to Jung. And regarding Breuer, Fromm quotes from Jones what he likes but stops quoting before

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Jones adds, on the very same page, that Breuer "had certain characteristics which were particularly antipathetic to Freud's nature. One was a weakness in his personality that made it hard for him ever to take a definite stand on any question. The other was a pettifogging kind of censoriousness which would induce him to mar any appreciation or praise by searching out a small point open to criticism—an attitude very alien to Freud's open-hearted and generous spirit" (Jones, I, 255).

"Freud's Passion for Truth and His Courage" are acknowledged in Fromm's first chapter—and explained: "He was a very insecure person, easily feeling threatened, persecuted, betrayed, and hence . . . with a great desire for certainty." Indeed, "He had to conquer the world intellectually if he wanted to be relieved of doubt and the feeling of failure." It was really a weakness "related to his position as the undisputed favorite son of his mother." Yes, he was really a mother's boy and never outgrew "the deep-seated receptive wish to be nursed." And "to account for his passion for truth, we must point to a negative element in his character, his lack of emotional warmth, closeness, love, and beyond that, enjoyment of life."

Freud certainly lacked many things, but *this* "negative element" is Fromm's invention, based on utter disregard for ample evidence. Nor is there any place in Fromm's portrait for Freud's heart-warming sense of humor, evident both in his writings and in scores of letters and remarks quoted by Jones. Fromm quotes only one mildly humorous remark—and fails to recognize its humor. He informs us that Freud once frankly admitted his "lack of understanding of women . . . when he said in a conversation: 'The great question that has never been answered, and which I have not been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is what does a woman want?' [*Was will das Weib?*]" Fromm does not mention that Freud said this to a woman who was also one of his most devoted friends and followers.

With *one* of Freud's closest disciples, Ferenczi, who toward the end of his life developed a non-Freudian approach, Fromm sides passionately against Freud, but simply ignores all the evidence that does not fit his claims; for example, Freud's deeply humane, de-

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tailed and humorous letter to Ferenczi about their differences (Jones, III, 163-5). Lots of other letters, too, show clearly that Freud was not so stubborn and authoritarian as Fromm pictures him; but some degree of obstinacy is, no doubt, a necessary element of greatness. Fromm sees the steel but not the velvet, the sternness but none of the humor, and offers us a caricature, gerrymandered from the three big volumes of the Jones biography and a couple of other books.

Fromm tells us that Freud "appreciated his courage as the most outstanding quality in his personality," and there is an implication that he had a rather high opinion of himself. We are not told how Freud cried when, soon after his first operation for cancer, one of his grandsons died; and—to cite Jones—"since his death he had not been able to enjoy life; he added: 'It is the secret of my indifference—people call it courage—toward the danger to my own life.' " Nor does Fromm quote any of the following—all from Jones's third volume:

"I am sure in a few decades my name will be wiped away and our results will last." "Fame comes to us only after we are dead, and frankly what comes afterwards does not concern me. I have no aspirations to posthumous glory. My modesty is no virtue." "Asked whether it meant nothing to him that his name should live, he replied: 'Nothing whatsoever, even if it should live, which is by no means certain. . . . I am far more interested in this blossom than in anything that may happen to me after I am dead. . . . I am not a pessimist. I permit no philosophic reflection to spoil my enjoyment of the simple things of life.' " The man who comes to life in words like these bears scarcely any similarity to the subject of Fromm's book.

Surely, Freud did underestimate the importance of cultural differences, although not so much as Fromm and other critics overestimate it. But Freud certainly did not try to explain all things in terms of sex, and in a crucial sense he was less simple-minded than most of his critics. In his first major work, *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud proposed a new interpretation of *Hamlet* in a celebrated footnote, which was later expanded into a whole book by Ernest Jones. By now the psychoanalytic inter-

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pretation of *Hamlet* is unfortunately better known than the conclusion of Freud's footnote:

"Just as, incidentally, all neurotic symptoms—just as even dreams are capable of overinterpretation, and indeed demand nothing less than this before they can be fully understood, thus every genuine poetic creation, too, has presumably issued from more than one motive . . . and permits more than one interpretation. What I have attempted here is merely an interpretation of the deepest layer of impulses in the soul of the creative poet."

By "deepest" Freud, no doubt, meant that which was least accessible, most hidden and most unexpected. And he had a way of generally emphasizing that which was in this sense deepest, most ignored and most offensive. But he did not claim, his critics notwithstanding, that the deepest layer is the only one and sufficient for an explanation. On the contrary.

Fromm, on the other hand, concentrates usually on what is not deep in this sense, but tells us again and again that he has given us *the* explanation. After relating one of Freud's dreams, which has been variously interpreted by Freud and by several critics, Fromm, ignoring the literature, says with his customary confidence: "The meaning of the dream is quite clear. . . ." In an earlier book, *The Forgotten Language*, he furnishes us in the same vein with *the* explanations of three Sophoclean tragedies, Kafka's *Trial* and *Red Ridinghood.** Under his psychoanalytic wand, all tragedy and mystery evaporate: if Creon (in Sophocles' *Antigone*) and K. (in Kafka's *Trial*) had only read a little Fromm, everything could have had a happy ending. Since Fromm published *Man for Himself*, tragedy has become unnecessary, if not inexcusable.

In 1696, John Toland published a book entitled *Christianity not Mysterious*. Fromm's lifework, but not Freud's, might well be superscribed: Everything Unmysterious. But is it not simpleminded in the extreme to suppose that Sophocles' and Shakespeare's tragedies and Kafka's novels, quite deliberately fraught with ambiguity, or a dream that has elicited a literature, or the character and work of men like Freud, Nietzsche or Wittgenstein

* For a detailed discussion, also of Fromm's views on religion, see my *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (Harper & Brothers), pp. 236-247; for some criticisms of Freud's views, *ibid.*, pp. 96ff. and 297ff.

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could be reduced to one simple and unmysterious explanation?

A little honesty inclines a man to give an explanation, but depth in honesty brings his mind to realize the limitations of any one explanation and confronts him with a renewed sense of mystery. To convey human greatness one must either refrain from explanation or show how no single explanation is sufficient. Psychology is not incompatible with the belief that there are great men; only a simple-minded psychology is.

Fromm ends his little book by calling Freud a great man, but throughout the book we are made to feel that he was really far less great than we had supposed. Without being as calculated as Mark Antony's great speech in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar,* Fromm's tributes to Freud's courage and his stature invite comparison with Antony's refrain that "Brutus is an honorable man." The leveling tendency that permeates the book and leaves its mark upon the reader shows the extent of those cultural influences upon Fromm that have led millions to disbelieve in great men altogether. But the insistence on cultural influences is not something that we owe to Fromm and other heterodox psychoanalysts but merely a fancy name for something Freud well knew, no less than Nietzsche and generations before him: conformism.

At all times men are subject to insidious pressures to accept the prejudices of their age and to rationalize them, whether theologically or scientifically. Nietzsche and Freud found that the best, if not the only, way to resist this danger is not to humor the hypersensitive ears of one's contemporaries by choosing comfortable words but, on the contrary, to emphasize precisely that which is not fashionable, not heard gladly—that which gives offense.

Fromm says of Freud: "Like Marx, he found a certain satisfaction in saying things *pour épater le bourgeois* (to shock the bourgeois)." Surely, that is to miss the point. Perhaps no writer ever wrote of sex more unsensationally than did Sigmund Freud, whose pure and simple prose is never cheap and always informed by a deep humanity. But he did insist on calling sex, "sex"; he did not like words like "erotic"; and it is easy to imagine what he would have thought of a psychoanalyst who entitled one of his books *The Art of Loving.*

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Kierkegaard was a Christian who insisted that Christianity must give offense; but his twentieth-century heirs, at least in the United States, speak comfortable words. They speak more of courage than he did but, if we listen closely, ask no more than that we take the risk of having faith although we might be wrong—the risk, specifically, to be Protestants. But does it take such a great deal of courage to be a Protestant in the United States today? The whole tenor of American theology today is not to give offense but to show that one can well be religious and quite up-to-date too. One can combine Christianity with Freud and Nietzsche, with Marx (in the thirties when he was fashionable) and with existentialism (after World War II, now that Marx is out of fashion). Whatever you have, Christianity has too. The theologians offer everything, and heaven too.

When the salt has lost its savor and Christianity its sting, when a culture has successfully assimilated even a religion which, as Kierkegaard insisted, is quite plainly incompatible with it, is it strange that Freud's new teaching, too, should have been made wholesome and inoffensive? Fromm's small tract on Freud is a mere symptom of the tendencies of our time—almost a parable about cultural influence. Fromm is but one of scores who started out as radicals and later came to savor popularity and, not deliberately to be sure, came more and more to write what their large audience likes to hear.

The men who come before us as the heirs of Kierkegaard and Freud join in the common cry that courage is a good thing while conformity is bad. But Kierkegaard's successors, unlike Kierkegaard, confirm the no less popular demand that we should join some church, and Fromm, unlike Freud, looks with suspicion, if not moralistic condescension, upon obstinacy, hardness and the willingness to pit one's own integrity against the judgment of the world. Today's prophets are like headmasters who denounce conformity in their commencement speeches but, during the year, refer boys who are quite indifferent to popularity to the psychiatrist. No sooner has Freud's moral courage been mentioned than it is treated like a disease. But not the least value of Freud is that he shows us that in our time, too, true nobility is possible.

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To return to tragedy once more, Fromm's book is a symptom of those attitudes that go far toward accounting for the lack of tragedies on our stages. We like to tell ourselves that those whose suffering is great are like ourselves: we sympathize with them but do not look up to them as, in spite of ourselves, we do look up to Shakespeare's tragic heroes or to Sophocles'. The hero of *The Death of a Salesman*, for example, is no hero but the un-hero par excellence: he is pathetic, not tragic. And the only victim of the Nazis who has touched the hearts of millions is a little girl, Anne Frank. An occasional motion picture glorifies the tragic virtue of nobility, of courage that holds out after success appears to be out of the question: *Bad Day at Black Rock*, for example, and *Twelve Angry Men* and *High Noon*. But on the screen the hero's obstinate integrity is in the end crowned with success: how else could you sell these virtues to the public?

It is often said that the confident faith of communism must be met by us with a no less firm faith that the future belongs to us. What we truly need is not such foolishness but more intelligence, integrity and moral courage. Also some of the stubbornness that refuses to surrender when no reasonable chance of victory remains. Sometimes it prevails over stupendous odds, as Freud did after standing quite alone for many years, or England in the Second World War. Sometimes it does not, as the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto did not, and as Freud in his fight with cancer did not. In the end, against death, none of us prevail; but there is a difference between death and death.

It is easy to see why a democratic society would be skeptical about great men and suspicious of the tragic virtues. Democracy depends on compromise. But democracy can ill afford to dispense with moral courage. Under certain circumstances, it may require moral courage to advocate compromise. What matters is that the decision is not influenced by the desire for acclaim. And there are few better representatives in our time of the rare combination of humility, ambition, love, courage and honesty than Sigmund Freud.

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Testament

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

You still forms and modes of the creation,
Charged with meaning for my spirit here
In its torment, in its exultation,
To your voices let me be an ear.

Cloud and mountain, rock and tree and flower,
Let me win you into me, to dwell
Deeply there till, wholly in my power,
You have told me what you have to tell.

Let my spirit, howsoever fleeting,
Be a meeting-place for root and star,
Where all meanings gather and, in meeting,
Learn from one another what they are.

O great Life, as I grow wiser, older,
Let me not, grown timid, close the door
On your tragic truth but, humbler, bolder,
Force it open wider more and more.

Orbit of some star through heaven sweeping,
Through my spirit let that orbit be—
Lashes on a girl's cheek wet from weeping,
When they're lifted curve their arc through me.

✪ JOHN HALL WHEELOCK's *Poems Old and New* won the Ridgely Torrence Memorial Award and the Borestone Mountain Poetry Award for 1956. His annual volume, *Poets of Today*, has discovered and introduced, each year since 1954, three young American poets.

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WRIGHT MORRIS

TIME HAS COMPLICATED RATHER THAN SIMPLIFIED Crèvecoeur's disquieting and perennial question, What *is* an American? This problem has engaged, in one fashion or another, both the distinguished native and the curious alien, minds of such different fiber and range as Henry James and D. H. Lawrence. At the moment, the world at large is seeking to arrive at a sensible opinion on this very subject. Is it Elvis Presley or Richard Nixon? Is it Stan, the Man, Musial, or Marilyn, the Chick, Monroe? Is it Harry Truman or Dwight Eisenhower—not to mention that often evoked but seldom pinned down shadowless figure called the man in the street? Not merely the world at large, but we, too, are seeking an answer. We are all curious. Nothing interests us quite so much as ourselves.

One might say that the writer, above all others, takes a vested interest in this topic, since he, in his fashion, is largely responsible for its existence. Character, as I never tire of saying, is primarily an imaginative act, a fiction, to which the flesh is incurably responsive. It is the fiction that shapes the fact. In a crude but instructive way it is no accident that the world's fairest morsels, as of this moment, are disturbingly alike. It is little more than a question of measurements. Mademoiselle Bardot, curved on the cinerama, is less a morsel created by God—although He certainly did His bit —than a somewhat fashionable fiction out of Hollywood. So it is only right and proper we should take her measure on the silver screen.

But with Americans, millions of them, all around us, how can our character be such a puzzle? Have we no eyes? Do we never gaze into our mirrors? We are faced with the paradox that the observant stranger may know more about us than we shall ever know about ourselves. With the exception of Henry James, it is the alien who gives us the durable word—and James, of course, had the vantage

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point of his exile. If length of stay were important to the grasp of national character, every citizen who reaches sixty years of age would be able to put De Tocqueville to shame. The opposite extreme is nearer the truth. A single hour in New York City will serve the traveler better than a stay of several years. His greatest vantage is to be free of our own clichés. He comes, of course, with his own, as every season of books bears witness, and we read that life must be different, indeed, in Rome, in Siam and in the hills of San Francisco. But in terms of what we seek to know about ourselves, the peculiar savor of our uniqueness, a few observant days will saturate the senses, and a week or two more might destroy the bloom of it. The rest is data to be gathered by machines that often bear a striking likeness to human beings.

The traveler who has crossed what we call a border, from France to Germany, from Austria to Italy, from Mexico to the United States, is freshly exposed, for one brief moment, to the climate of character. It comprehends the widest differences. A Harvard man, for example, in his attaché suit, would seem to have little in common with a Basin Street hepcat, but if chance or the Army should throw them together in a bar in Rangoon, or a pillbox in Korea, they will recognize each other on sight as one of a kind. This is one of life's most appalling revelations. It is the layer of bedrock that lies below the veneer of personality. That very person you cannot bear as a neighbor will prove to be, in alien waters, the one man alone who can read your smile, or recognize in your shrug commitments too profound to articulate.

This knowledge, happily, came to me quite young. I was on winter loan to an uncle in Texas, where I was exposed, as part of my education, to several hundred little Haldeman-Julius Blue Books and a day at the bottom of the Carlsbad Caverns. We arrived before dawn in order to see the sky darken with clouds of bats. It seemed to me they would leave little room for the tourists, but there proved to be room, lots of it, and after several haunted hours of subterranean life we assembled on a spot called the Rock of Ages. There a hymn was sung, and at its conclusion a gentleman with the voice of Zeus read off a roll call of all the states present. At that time I called Chicago my home, and hearing him call out "Illinois," I cried out "Here!" As I did, another voice blended with mine.

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Across the rock, his shadow looming like a monster, I saw this figure coming toward me, a flesh and blood creature from the very same state I was from myself. You can picture for yourself our embrace. It evades my powers of description. Even my uncle, a skeptical man, fell under the spell of this mystical union and invited the stranger to share our lunch. Our parting, at the cave's dark mouth, was something of a strain. I took his address, he took mine, and a month or so later, from Bloomington, Illinois, I received a letter on his business stationery. He was a dealer in cars, Used Cars, and he just wanted to tell me and my uncle that if we should ever want a good used car he would see that we got the bargain of our lives.

It seems to me this incident is saturated with *American* character. That chronic sense of aloneness, of not belonging—thanks to our uninhibited powers of destruction—breeds a passionate need to pin something down, or join something up. My used car salesman had come to the Carlsbad Caverns in order to find, and embrace, one of his own kind. Our mania for joining—book clubs, record clubs, health clubs, muscle clubs, golf clubs, clubs against joining clubs—is a feeble effort to slow up the flux that it is the genius of the culture to promote. As we talk about the Good Old Days, we can hardly wait to "modernize" the business, the kitchen and the basement, turn in last year's car on a new one, and play those dear old noisy records on the latest hi-fi outfit. But the old standards, to put it charitably, are not relevant. It is here that De Tocqueville was right and James was wrong. The culture that both dismays and amazes the world is something more than a diversion from Continental models—it is a new experience in human resources, in human energy. Destruction, rather than construction, seems to generate the climate of its character: it is not just today that the new is already obsolete. Here is De Tocqueville:

> I accost an American sailor and inquire why the ships of his country are built so as to last but for a short time; he answers . . . that the art of navigation is everyday making such progress, that the finest vessel would become almost useless if it lasted beyond a few years. In these words, which fell accidentally . . . from an uninstructed man, I recognize the general and systematic idea upon which a great people direct all their concerns.

What is instructive here is not only the observation, but the

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way the observer accepts it as a fact. He does not use it as a basis for moralizing clichés. He has found, and accepts, a new facet in many-faceted man. This is what we must try to do ourselves, putting to pasture for the moment our beloved opinions, and attempting to gaze, "right fronting and center," at the facts themselves. For this, too, as Thoreau reminds us, is in the grain of our character.

On the rim of the Grand Canyon last spring, I waited in line for a seat in the Grill as I used to wait to see Douglas Fairbanks or Greta Garbo. A place was found for me near the window, where a white-haired, gently befuddled lady, her hands full of postcards and curios for the children, returned to the table to leave her tip. She had fifteen cents clutched between two fingers, but seeing me there she upped it another dime. What might I *think* if she had left only fifteen cents?

This gentle creature was the spit and image of one of my fictions, and I would not have been surprised if she had paused to pick the lint off my sleeve. Skeptical concern for the wandering male child gleamed in her eye. Her hands, her tired feet, the glimpse I caught of her handbag, revealed a woman who had come into leisure after years of hard work; a woman who had made it, that is, the hard way, and who could very likely tell you a thing or two about the nature of life. Life, yes, but not leisure—leisure would be her undoing, leaving her to drift upon the shoals and reefs of tipping finance. In the vast, becalmed sea of leisure she was rudderless. Bits of rock for the children, greeting cards for the elders, get-well or consolation cards for the sick or bereaved, kept her—as her nieces would say—occupied. And here she was, amiably mindless, at the south rim of the Grand Canyon, with a collection of technicolor postcards that almost had her out of her mind.

I judged her old enough to be my mother, but I was the one who felt like the parent. Affection, shame and concern troubled me. I felt—indeed, I *knew* I was—responsible. In the family of American character I consider aunts and uncles my peculiar province—I take them in, like umbrellas, and after a few repairs put them back into service. On occasion I make up one from scratch. There on the rim of the Canyon, of all places, I ran into my own handiwork, as she had run into moccasins, blankets, beads and gifts for the child who is tired of everything. For her innocent fatuity I

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felt personally responsible. *What* would she do next? It seemed to me that I knew better than she did. If I put *my* mind to it, she would do it. It was as simple as that. Such character has its origin not in fact, but in fiction. Very likely it is a fiction that the character has not read. Untold thousands of young men who never set eyes on a book of Hemingway are pure and unadulterated Hemingway characters. It is a matter of style. It is style that sets the cliché.

But we must go even further. Character is revealed cliché. Both are, at their best and worst, inflexible. Both are appallingly predictable. The personality is styled in such a mold that its actions conform to a pattern, whether the pattern is virtuous, as we see it in a *man of character*—or delinquent, as we see it in a teen-ager of the beat generation. Both are American characters. An American fiction has shaped the flesh. A corset of inflexible characteristics gives them support. Just as crusty old characters now ornament the inns and byways of New England, taciturn Indians and soft-spoken Kee-*ow*boys ornament the corner drugstores of the West. They represent the great power, and the abuse, of the cliché. Our first problem, surgically speaking, is to remove the encrusted cliché from the subject. In the beginning was the word, and the word was made flesh. American character emerges from the American language, as the language emerges from the shaping imagination. These are bold words. To what extent do they account for the facts?

Is this not tantamount to saying that before Shakespeare, Cervantes and Melville, there were no Hamlets, Don Quixotes or White Whales? It is. In the precise sense that we recognize the type—the unique shock of this recognition—the Hamlets, Mournful Knights and White Whales follow on, rather than precede, the imaginative act. Those men so much like Hamlet and Quixote, and those White Whales so much like Moby Dick, were necessary to germinate the fiction that bred the type as we know it. But all those early Hamlets were obliged to lack the essential ingredient that Shakespeare added. The boy who casts himself as Jesse James or Marlon Brando, the girl who casts herself as Jayne Mansfield or Greta Garbo, are those who bear witness to the cliché. We are left with a product rather than a process—a coonskin hat rather than Davy Crockett. The child who wants to be Superman—but no more

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super, mind you, than his playmates—testifies to the power of a new conception, and its dissolution. It is the cliché, not the process, that proves to be contagious.

But every cliché once had its moment of truth. At the moment of conception it was a new and wonderful thing. That first joker to stop you cold with "Hey—straw's cheaper" put his finger into the formation of your character. So did that first cowboy you saw in the ads or on the silver screen, and that tattooed he-man who has lately taken to smoking filter-tip cigarettes.

Of the pantheon of characters available to us, from the hotrod hepcat to the cool chick, it is the cowboy that I find the most instructive. Now that he is all but gone, in fact, it appears that he is here to stay, in fiction. As every young man must know, and countless young women, he is currently pushing tattoos and filter-tips. What else he finds the time to do is not clear. The filter-tip is *new,* with its miraculous fibers, but the cigarette itself began with the cowboy, a pack of tissue-thin paper and strong tobacco in a Bull Durham sack. Perhaps the scene already arranges itself. We see him on horseback, a sea of cattle stretched behind him, but he has paused in the day's occupations to roll, with the skill of a magician, his immortal cigarette. The pouch dangles at his chin, we see the noose between his strong white teeth. He taps a few grains of the weed into the paper, his light-creased eyes scanning the horizon, and then, quicker than the eye, with a cunning sleight of hand it is rolled, and the tip of his tongue supplies the timeless seal. A flick of his thumbnail lights the match, we see the flame cupped in his lean brown hands, and as he inhales we taste the heavenly smoke with him. In our nostrils is a blend of sage, saddle leather and cattle-scented air. "Heigh-ho, Silver!" says a voice deep within us, and we are off.

It is no ordinary mortal we watch riding away. Style has made him a symbol, and what he smokes is an immortal weed. It will never pass—on the evidence—into nothingness. It will be brought back, like the "Venus de Milo," to sell strapless bras to less endowed charmers, or filter-tips to those mindful of their lungs. But our concern is with the use, rather than the abuse, of this conception. He is that hero with a thousand faces cut down to our size. He is that archetype, the self-sufficient man, reduced to his wits, his guts

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and his horse, who takes on single-handed the forces of evil in a world he never made.

There is some evidence to support the assumption that the only new man of the brave new world is the plains cowboy. No cliché has proved so durable, both at home and abroad, as that of the fast-shooting Lone Ranger, the truly good badman, mounted on his faithful horse. A unique product of the high plains environment, he was bred both so true, and so fine, that with the passing of the cattle kingdom he has passed with it. He has exchanged his mortal life for an immortal one. The newsstands of the world, from Omaha to Timbuktu, proclaim the durable charms of this conception—just as the small fry of the world, year in and year out, keep his memory green.

What we are faced with is less a man than a style, a fact transformed into a fiction not by one imagination but out of the folk mind of the tribe. No writer or painter—although there have been many—has set his seal on this conception. William S. Hart, Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Harry Carey, Gary Cooper, all have in turn loaned out their talents in its service, but the figure is mythic, and most easily apprehended when masked. Language and gesture, sign and symbol, the expressive ornament and the bone-clean essential, have seldom been combined with such casual perfection as in this lean figure on horseback. The saddle itself, like a coat of arms, is both heraldic escutcheon and portable empire, and I can think of no figure except the Indian in which form follows function so smoothly. The six-shooter, that portable arsenal, was the key to the cowboy's triumph over the Indian, and in turn over the imagination of men.

I have dwelt on this figure as one of the essentials in the formation of American character—gesture rather than speech, action rather than talk, with an indifference mindless as the wind to those aspects of life that come under the rubric of thought. Anti-egghead-ism is deep in American character. Such ideas and intuitions as we find congenial have been sheared of their breeding through *style*. Hemingway turning a phrase, the cowboy rolling a cigarette, the gunman slipping on or off a glove—for these things we have a painter's eye and a writer's ear. But let's have none of this long-haired talk about it, son. Just another slice of pie.

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That Bryn Mawr girl I used to know—one of the first to wear dark glasses in the dark—left the seat of my Model A roadster strewn with the tobacco she lost while rolling her own. Was it the money she saved? The aroma of the weed? No, it was the charm of the style. It currently puts levis on many pretty bottoms, and tattooed anchors on many pale hands. Clichés, bless them, both destroy life—and make it possible. Otherwise we would all, like that student from the progressive school, find the willful blowing of the nose impossible.

The contagious elements in style evade formulation. They are creations, rather than fashions, and arise out of organic impulses and hungers. In the cowboy I choose to see not only a unique contribution to style, but the key, in his fashion, to our many-faceted character. Of all of our improvisations he is perhaps the most perfect. And this has been his ruin. It has made him, in the flesh, inflexible. He was as doomed, on his conception, as the dinosaur. But in the treeless ranges of the mind, where he now does his roaming, this has proved to be the source of his charm. He resists, that is, our mania for tampering. Sombrero, chaps, shooting irons, coil of rope, the boots that make him walk like a cripple, these are things that do not give way, for long, to anything else. And this is rare, I hardly need tell you, in America. In a technical sense, the flair to improvise is the green light to leave nothing, good or bad, alone. We tamper with cars, radios and, above all, with our lives. That celebrated American know-how (subject to unpredicted Russian lunar eclipses) is a by-product of the curiosity that finds the attic full of irons, vacuum sweepers, record players and velocipedes that Father—when he finds the time—hopes to fix himself. Hi-fi apparatus will be there next—if anyone still has an attic—along with certain novels on the beat generation and an assortment of coonskin hats. I have a friend who has just moved his records into the attic to make room for more hi-fi equipment. The only records he needs now are those of oboes, clashing cymbals and trains leaving Grand Central. Lowering the needle to the platter he will say, "Now listen to this!"—and we do for thirty seconds. Then we skip a few grooves and listen to the rain falling on the roof.

This is a little maddening—but it is straight-grained American character. And it brings us, by circumambulation, to the center of

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our subject. If improvising is the key, there should be an art of improvisation. And we have it. It is what we call jazz. We not only have it, but it has proved to be, along with the cowboy, the most virulently contagious of all of our exports. It is not only politics that makes the world rock and roll. Wherever music can be heard, one hears jazz. And what is new in jazz is that improvisation—in the past a gift, or flair, of the jazz musician—has been raised to the level of an art. The man who improvises, who achieves more than a form of musical doodling, creatively produces something new out of something that was old. In part he destroys what was hallowed and familiar—it is here we hear the cries of distress and anguish—for the old beloved tune can hardly, as we say, be recognized. That, indeed, is the musician's intention. *Make it new* is precisely his challenge. Often he muffs it. Even in jazz, such talent is rare. But today he knows what he is about, and the American mania to tamper is slowly emerging into an American form of art. With or without our compliance it will charm us. In the harmonious sounds of jazz blend the discords of our nature. From the tweeter in the hi-fi speaker comes the word—*improvise!*

The attractive aspects of improvisation are obvious: we see and hear it daily in speech and gesture; it blows a fresh breeze into corners of staleness; the commonplace routines—cutting the grass or cutting the rug—will have a touch of this audacity. The gifts of youth take precedence over the skills of age. The high style is *Easy does it* and *Look ma, no hands!*

The debit side is less dramatic, but more disquieting. As a way of life the improvising flair lacks staying power. Almost anything but greatness can be pulled from its hat. The long pull, the lifetime effort, is against this grain, not with it. It believes with almost superstitious reverence in something called luck. This will serve the man at the gaming table, but in the exercise of will and imagination that generates great art, the improvising flair is a tool, but not an end. It is an amateur's gift and must be trained to do professional work. This does not often happen. We instinctively look for the short cut, the easy way.

On the evidence, which is impressive, improvisation is capable of singular achievements, especially of a collaborative nature, but that extended effort we recognize as greatness is not one of its

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characteristics. We have more men with greatness thrust upon them than we have men who achieve it. Only one thing has appeared to take the place of the mythic log cabin and the rise from rags to riches. This is the jackpot. First you need all the breaks; then you need all the luck.

And to improvise, however well, is to breed a form of incoherence, since everything must remain in a state of flux. The Indian clubs are in the air all at one time. It is virtually impossible to describe the *state* of things. A thing is no sooner made than we modify it; a street no sooner laid than torn up; a house no sooner built than torn down; a reputation no sooner created than exploited. Anyone who has looked for the house where he was born, the empty lot where he played, the porch where he wooed his sweetheart, will know the singular paralysis that grips the heart to find these landmarks gone.

It is here that the question arises, Without a sense of the past is it possible to have a culture? Or to put it more bluntly, Without a sense of the past do we have *people*? What else—we can hear Henry James ask—what else *is* human culture? But of this essential ingredient we have only its aftertaste, nostalgia. The past itself we daily destroy before our eyes. The great city of New York rings with the hammers of salvage, and hamlets that late gave birth to men of distinction are wiped off the map to make room for superhighways.

It gives pause. Is this a way of life, or a way of self-destruction? Perhaps the finest mind we have produced saw this with his customary penetration, but it proved to be one observation with which this restless analyst would not come to terms. The destructive elements in all this construction brought the mind of James to a standstill. What was it but a monster that fed on its own brood?

> No, since I accept your ravage, what strikes me is the long list of the arrears of your undone; and so constantly, right and left, that your pretended message of civilization is but a colossal recipe for the *creation* of arrears, and of such as can but remain forever out of hand.

This would seem to be a conclusive indictment. It expresses my own disquiet and apprehension. But it is now fifty years since it was made, and the culture of arrears is still very much in business.

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From the point of view of history, of the conservation of resources, we seem to be dealing with a flaw in nature, but our responsibility in this discussion is not merely to indict it, but to confront it. The destructive element is not the last word. However repellent it seems to the mind, however inadmissible it is as an aspect of culture, we are obliged to admit that a principle of waste can generate and sustain a great civilization. Perhaps not forever, but no principle has met this test.

On the evidence, which is impressive, the vitality of such tireless improvisation proves to be contagious on a world-wide scale. The stranger admits to not liking what we are—but to coveting, incurably, what we have. This distinction is naïve. What we are is what we have. And when he has it—which will be soon enough—he will be the same.

It lies beyond the range of this discussion to speculate on the nature of such energy, except where we seem to see it, or feel it, in the formation of American character. It is here that the word "improvise" provides a link. Energy that appears primarily destructive has its constructive elements, and in what we call jazz the constructive element is now paramount. Sound and fury that all too often appear to signify nothing are more disposed for human use than James was able to acknowledge. On this point it is James, himself, who sets us straight.

> From the moment that the critic finds himself sighing . . . that the cluster of appearances can *have* no sense, from that moment he begins, and quite consciously, to go to pieces; it being the prime business and high honor of the painter of life always to *make* sense—and to make it most in proportion as the immediate aspects are loose or confused. The last thing decently permitted of him is to recognize incoherence—to recognize it, that is, as baffling; though of course he may present and portray it, in all richness, *for* incoherence.

If we are, indeed, so richly incoherent, the fault would seem to lie with the fiction—as it does. It is bad fiction that governs our lives. I wish we could say that all bad fiction goes where the critics would like to put it, but we cannot: it goes into the too, too solid flesh. It is what we see, if we can bear to look, walking the streets. Like the dead with their green complexions that Strabo saw and complained of, they are full of such vitality that the living run for

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their lives. The good prevails, if at all, by the skin of its teeth; but the bad would seem to be the very stuff that life feeds on, so let us be dutifully thankful for so much of it. In this gross pasture the wild flowers smell the best.

But if we ask ourselves why American life, with its incoherence, so captivates the stranger, the answer does not lie in our department store basements, where we usually look. It lies in the imaginative nature of life, in the fact that nature imitates art. Nowhere else in the world, and at no other time, has a culture so massive remained as a *process*, changing its shape, and its nature, daily, before the world's eyes. It is this that proves to be contagious in our jazz, our literature and our movies. Life is captivated by the sight of life. The daily ruin that we make, and yet somehow survive, is not unlike that of the conceptual process. This is what the imagination must do with the diet of outworn clichés. This is what Americans must do with their loose and confused lives. Make it new. Never mind what it costs. In our language what we call slang, in our music what we call jazz, and in almost all of what we call fiction, this destructive-constructive improvising is the key. As it is part, indeed, of every truly creative act. "Every genius," Malraux observes, "leads a revolt against a previous form of possession. . . . it is the fact that he alone, amongst all those whom these works of art delight, should seek, by the same token, to destroy them."

Something commensurate with our capacity for wonder draws Americans to the rim of the canyon, to the brink of the abyss, and to the gadget department of the local dime store. There we see what both man and God hath wrought. Neither spectacle leaves us gratified. Out of the cloudless sky a voice whispers—*improvise!*

The Grand Canyon, so far, has resisted, but I wouldn't lay bets on it. I found the white-haired lady who had upped her tip a dime seated where the view was the most expansive. In her lap she had peanuts for the chipmunks and a newspaper. The headlines reported that another rocket had been shot into space, and there was a picture of it. Without turning her gaze from the Canyon she said, "*What* will they do next?" And knowing her better than she knew herself, I did not reply. She not only knew; she was preparing herself for it.

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Personality *vs.* Personalities

ALBERT GUÉRARD

IN PHILOSOPHY, I AM A PLURALIST. I believe that there are innumerable independent universes within the cosmic pluriverse. I believe there are many parallel regimes, codes of ethics and creeds, each lustily damning the others, within our would-be monolithic "American Way of Life." I believe that under the painted veil of enforced customs in which the anthropologists find such delight, this is also true of the Zuñis, the Samoans, the Trobrianders. Nay, I believe there are many minds, often at odds, within our single individual mind. God fulfills Himself in many ways, all past our understanding.

But, on a less lofty and more definite plane, I am steadily for the singular against the plural. I am for liberty against liberties, which are privileges; for religion against religions, which are sects and heresies; for culture, the pursuit of our total perfection, against cultures, which are traditional conformities, the unwisdom of prejudice. In the same spirit, I am for personality—self-knowledge and self-reliance—against personalities—autocrats, leaders, heroes, geniuses, prophets. For to be a follower of such personalities is to abdicate our own.

Pluralist, singularist? Such an absurd contradiction is all too familiar in the welter of instincts, traditions and aspirations that we dignify by the name of thought. The medieval realists were the most radical of idealists. The men who rejected the freedom of the will, Mohammedans, Calvinists, Jansenists, Marxians, proved to be heroes of the indomitable will. Southern Democrats are obviously the sworn enemies of democracy. There are Catholics who proclaim themselves nationalists. There are soldiers who profess to be Christians. There are Protestants who, after breaking the

✪ This article is the last essay written by ALBERT GUÉRARD before his death. The author of numerous books on the subjects of France and literature, Mr. Guérard's most recent book is *France: A Modern History*.

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shackles of traditional authority, affirm that they are orthodox. There are great engineers whose lives have been devoted to big business, that is to say, to collective enterprise, and who, in economics, boast of their rugged individualism as though they were Robinson Crusoe or the Village Blacksmith. Before wrestling with any problem, we should pause a moment to meditate on "the meaning of meaning" and "the tyranny of words."

In the spirit, all men are fabulous monsters—centaurs, sphinxes, chimaeras. A chaos of vocabularies and ideologies is superimposed upon a chaos of feral urges, instincts, reflexes: confusion worse confounded. Yet there is a guiding thread in the four-dimensional labyrinth, within and without. That thread is awareness or consciousness. Man exists only because he refuses to submit to chaos. As Pascal put it, even if blind forces were to destroy him, his awareness would make him greater than that which crushes him.

This one thread we clutch at the very moment we refuse to admit its existence. I alluded above to the will power of men who denied the freedom of the will. Similarly, it is a triumph of consciousness to be aware of the unconscious: this is the key to all psychoanalyses. It is a victory of personality to choose deliberately the dissolution and annihilation of personality. All our angry young men, the belated and sedulous apes of Lord Byron, strive at any rate to be vital and even daimonic, not passive. "I deny and I curse: therefore I am."

And consciousness should be coextensive with conscience, as it is in French, for conscience is the guide to action. "Know thyself": such is the foundation of moral life. And the first step in such knowledge is to reject all adventitious thought, all rules imposed from without. When our rebels affirm, a few aeons after Lucifer, "Evil, be thou my good! Chaos, be thou my order! Absurd, be thou my sense!" they are effecting a Nietzschean transvaluation, they are not destroying the notion of value. For they judge—and with what assumption of inspired infallibility! With what scorn for the vulgar herd who are not aware they are lost, who refuse to follow the fashionable Gadarene rush into self-destruction!

Personality: self-rule; rule of the self, by the self, for the self; but *rule*—hateful thought! *Fais que vouldras*, do what thou choos-

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est, the one great commandment of Thélème: but there must be a *thou* at the core, not a void, not a whirl. *Vouldras* may be rendered as "wilt," "pleasest," "choosest," but all three interpretations imply a nucleus of consciousness and a capacity for action. *Fais que vouldras* is an imperative, a categorical imperative: *Do; act.* All this is as trite as elementary arithmetic, as ineluctable as the processes of nutrition. It goes back through Tennyson (self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control) and Polonius (To thine own self be true) to the dim ages when we emerged out of the primeval slime. Every denial of selfhood is but a halting restatement.

A categorical imperative: *Do.* The categorical negative: *Thou shalt not,* while it cannot destroy, certainly does confine and warp the nuclear self. I take it that there are men who are of negations all compact. They are law-abiding. They never transgress. They are *virtuous*: another example of the absurd twist common usage may give a word. For *virtue* does not consist in refraining from action: it is strength, power, *virtù.* Such men—I have never met any except in the shadowy realm of literature—are literally *hollow men.* Prohibitions have their uses: ignore them at your peril. I myself have adopted as a rule of life the immortal lines of François Coppée: "He had what it takes to be a sound groceryman: / He was punctual, abstemious, chaste, and thrifty." Such a rule is valid, as far as it goes. The trouble is that it goes nowhere. It is a stop sign.

Art is first of all the art of living. Secondarily, it is the expression of life, in the only way in which life can be apprehended and expressed, through a personality. Impersonal art, professed but not practiced by some realists and Parnassians, is on a level with Temperamental Science in the crazy realm of things-as-they-ain't. An art based on the conscious and willful destruction of personality would be committing suicide. It can lead only to the shapeless mass of the "Unknown Masterpiece," as in Balzac's *Le Chef-d'Œuvre Inconnu,* in Arthur Machen's *The Hill of Dreams,* in Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus,* in Christiane Rochefort's *The Warrior's Rest.* Art and personality are indissolubly linked. And to every conception of personality will correspond a doctrine of art and a technique.

The individual, we all agree, never is a single animated princi-

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ple, a living theorem, a book-in-human-shape. Even Robespierre was more than *The Social Contract* made flesh. A man is a bundle of nerves, a complex of perceptions, sensations, emotions, and whatever the latest psychological fad may discover. The individual exists in the same sense as the nation: there are innumerable factors at work within and without, frequently at cross-purposes; yet there must be some unifying element, some consciousness of selfhood, some degree of identity or consistency in experience and in action. *L'être ou le néant*; to be or not to be; to be aware or to dissolve altogether.

Now if we believe that the unifying element is a principle, accepted by our reason, and imposed by our will, self-discipline becomes the supreme test of a personality. The strong man is the captain of his soul; he commands and is obeyed. "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control" again: the gospel of Tennyson, most flawless of Victorians, laureate of Albert the Good. To such a conception must correspond an art based on logic and restraint. Adorn it as you please with Celtic wild flowers, such an art remains essentially *classical*.

If we put the emphasis on the spontaneous, uncontrolled, eruptive forces within the ego, upon imagination, passion, ecstasy, if we hold that the greatest personality is the one that feels most intensely and reacts most vigorously, our ideal will be the volcanic hero, fuliginous or incandescent, and our gospel will be *romanticism*.

Then personality may mean the consciousness of our physiological states. I feel angry because of some condition of my vasomotor nerve system; I am despondent or elated according to the mysteries of my digestion. A drug changes, for the time being, my outlook on life. Jonah and John Brown, God's angry men, could have been cured of their holy wrath with a chemical pacifier. The gloom of Ecclesiastes, La Rochefoucauld, Schopenhauer, Kafka, could have been dispelled by an injection. If we seek the key to personality in psychophysiology, with Taine, Ribot, Georges Dumas and their innumerable disciples, then materialistic realism or naturalism will be our normal mode of expression. This is what Zola strove for—and failed to attain, for he had remained a romanticist in his heart.

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But in all three cases, the essential element is consciousness: the consciousness of discipline, the consciousness of passion, the consciousness of the body. It is against this tyranny of the conscious, whether intellectual, sentimental or physical, that we have been rebelling for well over half a century. In this rebellion, scientists, mystics and artists are found in shifting, bewildering alliances. Consciousness, we are told by discordant unanimous voices, is but a plane, a mere abstraction. Our acts and thoughts are strange creatures of the deep that emerge only to die: the very act of awareness kills them. The connection that we may be tempted to establish between them on the conscious plane is an illusion; the secret lies far below. Classical order, romantic intensity, realistic accuracy, all fail to express Man, because they barely skim the surface. To the diver alone may be granted the pearl of great price.

According to this conception, the effort of art should tend, not to fasten tighter the knot of our consciousness, but to loosen it. Consciousness is not the man. It is not even the symbol of the man. It is the accidental interference of profound waves upon an arbitrary plane.

This new psychology claims to be a deeper realism. The "slices of life" it offers us are four-dimensional, as a modest start. With romanticism, it has in common the rebellion against logical discipline. It comes tantalizingly close to Bergsonian anti-intellectualism. To drift headlong with the Vital Surge is Reality; to plot neatly on a sheet of graph paper the course already run is a pastime we might well outgrow. The same conception has always found delightful echoes among the mystics in politics and religion. It is, in sober truth, "obscurantism": dark is the way, and darkness is the goal. That "congruency with the unutterable" so vaunted by old Carlyle was nearer the philosophy of the unconscious than Voltairian enlightenment, romantic sentiment, or pseudo-scientific-materialism, his menagerie of *bêtes noires*.

And yet, when all is said and done, art, personality and life itself are all summed up in awareness. Even, and perhaps most of all, the awareness, denied to the practical man, that there are unconscious depths. We cannot jump out of our own shadow; neither can we bring the unconscious alive to the plane of consciousness. Those

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who accept the Dark Forces as their masters, including James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, are compelled to fake and compromise. The stream can be plotted only when it is the stream of consciousness. Even the memories of dreams are not visitors from the unconscious floating into our waking life: they are artificial reconstructions of a twilight state, and do not plunge very deep—they are loose and inchoate rather than profound. Abysmal chaos is forever inaccessible, because it is inconceivable. The best ersatz we have to offer is *willful* disorder.

I am not a classicist, a romanticist or a naturalist; perhaps it would be more accurate to say that I am all three. So I welcome the agelong attempt, clarified and intensified in our century, to gash an opening in the painted canvas that the vested forms of *culture* offer to our gaze as the sole reality. Beyond, darkness is visible; and not, like the beatific vision, dark with an excess of light. This awed revelation of the nonrational, the nonpassional, the nonmaterial, fosters in us the sense, well known to Matthew Arnold, that "below the surface stream, shallow and light" of what we say, or think, or even feel we are, there flows the relentless dark current of what we are indeed. This sense creates in us, as it did in Pascal, the shudder of the abyss within, more haunting than the abyss above: *o altitudo*! Still, that shudder is conscious, and makes us conscious of our personality. A trembling light in the void of the Absolute (or in the absolute of the Void: it refuses to make sense either way), a mere pinpoint, but all the light, all the life we have, infinitesimal and of infinite price. In the eyes of the staunchest orthodoxy, the conscious human mind is the image of God's, and primal chaos is not. God created Himself as a person through the act of creating the world, that is to say, by conquering chaos.

This conception of the self, aware of its existence through its power to accept and reject, is compatible with anger and revolt on specific issues: it is not compatible with anger and revolt *in the void*. It rejects self-dissolution as man's highest goal. The rebels aspiring to perdition are cutting off their noses to spite the face of the philistine world (*bourgeois* and *Communists* are two equivalents): the philistines are not worth the trouble. I have long aspired to death: "*ce pays nous ennuie, ô Mort*! *Appareillons.*" But I want

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to die all at one time and all in one piece. And may it be said of me, as it was of Monsieur de la Palisse, "A quarter of an hour before his death, he was still alive."

To be one's self is no easy matter. A civilized adult has to peel off the layers of culture that encrust him. A primitive—I have known primitives intimately, my children and grandchildren—has to create himself through a dialectic process, a constant battle between the vital core and the environment, physical and social, a battle that enriches and strengthens both. The man who rejects the environment altogether, even for the sake of holiness, loses himself: it may be a worthy goal, but not on the human plane. A man—or woman like Margaret Fuller—who "accepts the universe" instead of exercising a choice, is likewise courting annihilation: uncritical acceptance is suicide. Only God can accept the universe; and, on one occasion at least, He repented.

The first duty of man is to save his individual soul. I do not say his *immortal* soul. I refuse to deny that there is an immortal spark in me; but, divested of its body, cut off from its earthly environment, it cannot be named or conceived. To save our soul alive, we must conquer, or either absorb or reject, everything imposed from without: law, custom, fashion. Again, on the spiritual plane, we return to the impregnable Cartesian rock, "Never to accept a thing [fact, thought, feeling] as true unless it appears to me clearly and evidently to be such." The same fight must also proceed within ourselves, "Never to allow a single element in our personality despotically to subjugate or destroy all the others." For if dispersion is a mortal disease of the self, so is monomania. We must seek identity in diversity. *Unum,* but *e pluribus.* In psychology and ethics as well as in government, I am a federalist.

At the present moment, the chief danger does not come from the upholders of the eternal verities, the dead hand of the past. Nor should we dread overmuch the would-be creators of some "brave new world," mechanical, standardized, unhuman. Let the legions of T. S. Eliot (Catholic, classical, monarchist) fight it out with the cohorts of Karl Marx (materialistic determinism). In their conflict we find our freedom. The most insidious peril lies on a less lofty

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plane. It is found, from season to season, in the waves or vogues. It is much easier to defy Aristotle or Saint Paul than the Great Boyg, Madison Avenue or plain Mrs. Grundy. And the vogue most perilous to the soul, among intellectuals, is that of nonconformity. I was once asked by a hundred-per-cent orthodox colleague: "Why are you not a rugged individualist, like everybody else?" I might be asked today: "Why are you not lost, like every one worth his salt?" Well, I want to choose my own style of ruggedness. No one can force me to join the Legion of the Lost unless I, myself, feel lost, in my mind and in my heart. I have the right to turn my back on *The Castle* and to shrug my shoulders at *The Trial*. If I enjoy Kafka, it is on the literary plane, through my willing suspension of disbelief. I may be blown to pieces at any moment; less dramatically, I know I am due to collapse within a very short time. But I refuse to go to pieces of my own accord; and above all, I refuse to go to pieces at the behest of the Holy Barbarians and the Angry Young Men.

This simple creed is implicitly that of the common man; but it is not common to admit it. Indeed, trite as it may seem, it takes you to lonely crags. It is far more comfortable to be "lost" with a jolly, or at any rate a noisy, crowd, than to assume your full responsibility as an individual. Individualism means substituting *taste,* your own taste, zest, relish, gusto, for *good taste,* which is snobbish fastidiousness. It means placing *faith,* the substance of things hoped for, above *orthodoxy*—the traditions, ritual and tenets of a collective (in Greek and Latin *ecclesia*). It means rejecting the blasphemy: "My country [or my race, my class, my church, my party] right or wrong!" For there is no loyalty worthy of the name except to truth and justice as *you,* seeking earnestly, see them. Polonius and Martin Luther are in accord: "To thine own self be true"; "So help me God, I cannot otherwise."

If the most insidious threat to the self is the vogue, the most deadly is hero worship. We hope to gather strength—and prestige—by identifying ourselves with one in whom we recognize superiority. If his thought releases, disciplines, intensifies our own, if his example nerves us to the line of action we secretly desired,

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but did not dare to take, then the result is positive. I say *positive*, not necessarily *good*. For the thought and action of the leader may be mistaken. We must never forget that there was a Hitler, and that there are many would-be Hitlers in our midst. In the most favorable interpretation, however, a master does not destroy our personality: he reveals us to ourselves. He may be the chosen leader of free men.

But between accepted discipline and enslavement, the balance is precarious, even when the act of abdication is open-eyed and deliberate. The free man cannot commit himself *in toto* and forever. He cannot shirk his responsibility. He must be, even when he chooses to conform and obey, a *fellow traveler*, not a unit in a driven herd. This is the attitude of modern scientists. They do not grudge their reverence and gratitude to the pioneers: Copernicus, Newton, Lavoisier, Darwin, Freud, Einstein. But they are most true to the spirit of their masters when they reserve the right to extend, alter or even discard their hypotheses. Science has been expanding at a fabulous rate because every scientist is first of all a Cartesian, because he refuses to accept anything purely on authority, because he will not "consider a thing as true unless it appears to him clearly and evidently to be such," until he has exhausted every form of systematic doubt. Corneille, Descartes' contemporary, boldly carried the same spirit in literature: "I believe in the rules of Aristotle, *not because they are Aristotle's*, but because they are in accord with reason." He was a fellow traveler, not a slave.

This rejection of all human authority, personal or collective, is not based on rough equalitarianism, "every man as good as every other man, and a darn sight better." I hold this truth to be self-evident, that men were not created equals. Paradoxically, my anarchism, or autarchism, is founded not on conceit but on modesty. I have no right to challenge Einstein: I do not know enough. But neither am I qualified to agree with him. I feel like the charlady, who after listening to a sermon by a learned bishop, commented, "Of course, I would not *presume* to understand." She knew her place, in true British fashion; and I know mine, which in such fields is humble enough. All I have the right to say is that experts seem to accept Einstein's conclusions, which therefore have

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(pragmatically) a high degree of probability. I do not understand the theologies of Niebuhr or Tillich either. But here experts disagree: both Jacques Maritain and Sir Julian Huxley register dissent, and so probability becomes very tenuous. In such cases, I am satisfied with Mencken's standard reply to his opponents: "You may be right."

We are all aware that there have been lords of misrule, false prophets, blind leaders of the blind. This calls for caution: look twice at your Duce, Führer or Caudillo before you irrevocably pledge your loyalty. But I want to go further: never commit yourself at all. For even captains of the spirit whose appeal cannot be denied and whose intentions are lofty offer temptation rather than salvation. They are like potent drugs that may have immediate, startling, miraculous effects, but which in the long run are more likely to stupefy or to kill than to cure.

Napoleon, in one of his rare moods of self-doubt, said of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "I wonder if the world would not have been better off, if he and I had never lived." I admire them both: in the case of Napoleon, I devoted a long book, *Reflections on the Napoleonic Legend*, not to deny but to define his greatness. But in both cases, my answer would be: "Alas! the world had richly deserved a Rousseau and a Napoleon; but let that double experience be a lesson."

The cult of personalities, even if we call them Providential Men, is a form of mob psychology that personalists have learned to distrust. The mob—and there is no lack of scholars, scientists, divines and practical men in the crowd—chooses its leaders not for the cogency of their thought, and not for the finer aspects of their character, but for some rough simplification or dramatic exaggeration: every symbol is crude. Even Gandhi, perhaps the best of all *human* leaders and one of the most effective, owed much of his power to eccentricities which in themselves were not admirable—his loin cloth, his use of fasting for political blackmail. History, the mirror of collective moods, is hopelessly melodramatic. It turns a cold shoulder on Lafayette, who was consistent in well doing, as a mere Sir Charles Grandison; it extols, even when it condemns,

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Marie-Antoinette, Mirabeau, Danton, Marat, Robespierre, Napoleon, because, even if wrongheaded, they were vivid.

Without any thought of debunking, we cannot deny that almost inevitably there is a degree of histrionism, and therefore of vulgarity, in the superman: Washington was a miracle. The hero, genius, prophet, "plays his part" in both senses of the phrase: he assumes responsibility, but he also acts for public acclaim. At times, the line between whole-hearted admiration and blind worship becomes faint and shimmering. This is particularly true when we attempt to appraise the Messiah complex. Joan of Arc, Gandhi, De Gaulle, believed in their mission. So did Lenin, Carson, Mussolini, Hitler, Jinnah. So do Ben-Gurion, Nasser, Castro. They merge their personality with their cause, which might lead them to absorb the cause into their personality. Their dedication turns into a dictatorship. *They* are the Way, and the only Way. Claims to inspiration and infallibility inevitably follow: *Il Duce ha sempre ragione*. Probably Stalin, at the height of his nefarious power, was in his own eyes the Russian people and World Communism incarnate. Any challenge to his authority was a sin against the Holy Ghost.

I was from infancy and I remain in old age deeply attached to France. But I am conscious of the harm done to the country and to its ideals by those supermen who "made" France, who claimed to "be" France: Richelieu, Louis XIV, Robespierre, Napoleon. If I did not grudge my qualified support to Clemenceau and to De Gaulle, it is because I felt that both had too much fundamental sanity to assert: "I, and I alone, am the Way." All my adult life, I have been a socialist, like the early Christians, like the members of religious communities today. But all my life I have resented the caricatural deformation of socialism caused by Marxian orthodoxy. For hero worship means "Our leader right or wrong." Our leader, with all his human flaws, which are miraculously transmuted into virtues; the thought of our leader, as it was in the days of his mission, even though those days may be long past. I am by no means sure that Marx's doctrine was right even in 1848; I am certain that it has been proved wrong in the century that followed the *Manifesto*. If socialist thought had retained the *sine qua non* of thought

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—free discussion, free experimentation—if it had not restricted and fenced off the vast field opened by such men as Robert Owen, Louis Blanc, even wild Fourier, even stodgy Cabet, even fumbling Louis-Napoleon, even Proudhon, paradoxical and perverse, what holocausts might have been spared, what tragic dread would now be removed! Miseries on the epic scale, Napoleon's Russian campaign, the two world wars, the brutal wrenching of Pakistan from India, are the prolonged shadows of supermen.

Paradoxically, *recognized* supermen—and what can be done about the mute inglorious Milton?—are such because they are common denominators, and therefore common. This is not meant as a term of contempt. Every one of us is ninety-nine per cent the Common Man. The greatest among us are those who best realize their common humanity, who strive, each in his own path, to be "Man, and the Son of Man." But then, why link the common cause with the idiosyncrasies of a particular leader? Why not be a socialist, and recognize Marx's burning devotion to the socialist idea, without committing ourselves to his personality and to his individual doctrine, period pieces with shaggy whiskers?

In rejecting hero worship, I am not advocating mediocrity, and least of all meanness. *Grandeur*, in which I believe, must be sought in our own hearts, not in an idol, living or dead. Let us be starry-eyed, but not at second hand. Let us devote ourselves to the cause, not to the man.

Recently I came across a ten-point program of the Bahai fellowship. With every one of these points I agree, heart and soul. I know of no other group—nation, church or party—that has so compacted them together. They seem to me necessary and sufficient. But I cannot call myself a Bahaist. Those things to me are "true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report," but not because they were inspired by Baha'u'llah. They were uttered in ancient days, and in these latter times by Victor Hugo, by Jaurès, by Zamenhof, by a choir innumerable of men of good will. I am proud to belong to their spiritual family: of my own choice. The key to a righteous life is not to believe in a superman, "right or wrong"; but, if his message finds echoes in your hearts, to be a fellow believer with him.

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Against Hope

PHYLLIS MCGINLEY

When mischievous Pandora (the first woman),
Greedy for what was hid
In Jove's great box, succumbed to being human
And flipped, as it were, her lid,
All miseries, they say, went pouring past her
Into the world's scope—
Every conceivable ill, plague, spite, disaster,
But at the end came Hope,
A fluttering envoy always in reach, on call.
And Hope was worst of all.

Alas, Pandora! Had she only been
Quicker to act or else more dilatory
And trapped the insect in,
Our chroniclers could tell a different story.
Man, the poor beast,
Might have become accustomed to life's uses,
Put up with famine nor awaited feast,
Accepted his bruises,
His lumps and bumps and smarts and his crops of stone.
But Hope never lets him alone.

Louder than famished midges, buzzing and humming,
Hope swarms at his shoulder, makes him promises of
Goals, grails, importances, a Second Coming,
Unnotional love,
No later than Tuesday. He cannot sit down in tears
But Hope whines round his ears
All lies and tattle.

"That cloud," she whispers, "from which has lately come
Lightning to take your homestead and your cattle,
Look! may be lined with pure uranium.

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The friends who did you dirty
May still repent. How foolish to despair!
Your sons will learn to love you when they're thirty.
This rutted road somewhere
May fork toward Tyre or Eden, who knows which?
Perhaps by next October
You will be rich,
Tactful, well-tailored, famous, slender and sober.
Climb therefore out of that comfortable ditch
And start again upon your foot-sore travels."

Thus like a shrewd
Penelope, Hope every night unravels
His shroud of fortitude,
Coaxing him on from hurt to hurt forever;
Cries that this foaming river
On which a thousand floating relics move
Will be his last barrier before the City.
His pictures will sell, his sinuses improve,
The critics write him luminous and witty
If he but take the last, impossible stride.
There is no wholesome gust
From the world's ends can blow her from his side.
He cannot hide
To lick his wounds or seek the easy dust
But she is with him, oracles in her voice.

Oh! given Pandora's choice
(Or even any reasonable offer),
I would let all escape from the God's coffer
But slam the lid and lash it down with rope
Before I let go free
Malignant, flighty and infectious Hope,
Man's pestilential flea.

✪ PHYLLIS McGINLEY, a member of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR Editorial Board, is well known for her poetry. Her most recent book, published this fall, is *Times Three*, a selection of verse from the past three decades, with seventy new poems.

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Ignorance and Privacy

OSCAR MANDEL

WHEN LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER MADE its first uncensored appearance in the United States not long ago, I took the risk of being corrupted and bought a copy in a drugstore in Taos. The store, as a matter of fact, offered me a choice between a neatly printed edition containing an introduction by a notable critic, with a preface to that introduction by another one, and a rather smudgier edition that included as an addendum the court action in New York which liberated the novel. I bought the smudgy edition and did not regret it; for, much as I savored *Madame Bovary* and *Ulysses*, and much as I enjoyed most of *Lady Chatterley*, I find the real drama of their careers as books even more interesting. What Connie does to Sir Clifford did not arrest my attention half so much as what the Postmaster and the Judge were doing to the novel itself.

I read the novel (and was, as I will explain later and blush to admit now, shocked by it), and then I turned to the legal document. Once more I had occasion to admire a judge and the American court system. It is a matter for great thanksgiving that one branch of our government has managed to keep itself afloat in the democratic wash; that intellect and wisdom still utter a few commands in the administration of the country, when in the other branches of the government thinking by concepts has all but disappeared.

The presiding judge was obviously bent on putting out a fire in the book-burning game which occasionally is played even among us. Whether he *really* had law on his side, or whether he squeezed law as humanity and discretion bade him, is another question. Per-

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Another of Mr. Mandel's articles, "Nobility and the United States," appeared in the Spring, 1958, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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haps if Lawrence had stood at his side during the hearings, the judge might have given him a wink or two as he bludgeoned the inchoate postmaster. The law required him to judge on the pruriency or obscenity of the work in question. If it were demonstrated that the book did make a more than ordinary "appeal to prurient interest," it was to lose its right to exist. At the very least, the defense had to make clear that the reader's mind would be aroused together with the flesh in a kind of intellectual libidinousness, a philosophical lubricity. Fortunately for liberty, the verdict was that Lawrence's book did not exist for the sake of exciting unworthy impulses; that it constituted an important document; and, moreover, that it was sincere and downright speculative. It dealt with civilization, in short, and not coitus. Off went the postmaster (cheeks burning, we suppose) to give the change of order. Taos bought a supply; and a copy found an uneasy home with me, as great things often end in small.

The judge could not help himself. He was going to exonerate the book, and the law stipulated that, in order to be exonerated, it must be judged non-provocative. Therefore non-provocative it was judged to be. But who will believe this absurdity? Those, perhaps, who think that the "Maja Desnuda" or a nude by Weston is a "harmonious form," a "plastic shape." But the reaction of a male whose manhood has not been castrated by a devotion to the purest ideals of art will embrace, along with a dozen other emotions, the emotion of sex. I do not know who is to decide whether the sexual feeling is overwhelming, dominant or ancillary in any of these experiences. But I have no doubt that in Lawrence's novel, the erotic scenes are exciting, in the most physical sense of the word, far beyond what they would have to be in order to become "an integral, and to the author a necessary part of theme, plot and character." In other words, the joys of sensuality, whether presented with utter naïveté or in the guise of a *Weltanschauung*, can be conveyed with much less pictorial detail than what Lawrence indulges in. For proof of this, we need do no more than turn to Longus' *Daphnis and Chloë* or Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.

It is the pictorial quality of Lawrence that draws one's attention, for the "prurient interest" is always more easily aroused by

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the visual arts than by the literary and the acoustical. This is so, whether the picture be of a Venus Pandemos or a Brigitte Bardot. I do not say that the degree of sexual evocation is always the same. The difference between a pornographic picture and a work of art is precisely that in the latter the sexual response is only one of the responses; it gives an edge to other responses; it does not stand steeply alone, troubling our peace, as pornography does. But even the most "artistic" nude is a naked person. We will except cubistic nudes, of course.

Now literature has been trying for a century or more to attain to the condition of pictography—to transform the word into an eidolon. Word-painting is regarded as one of the noblest of literary achievements. But literature has been false to itself in allowing this estimate. Balzac wanted to describe the Maison Vauquer so punctiliously that we would *see* it—more, he wanted us to smell and touch it too. These pages are not to be despised, but they are finally boring. It was not and it is not the province of the literary arts to reproduce the visual or the auditory, but to imitate action. Critical ecstasies over descriptive passages of "great power" are usually affectations and seldom prevent the reader from leaping across them in order to seek out the drama, the ethical issues, the human meanings. Balzac pictured the house, the street, the countryside, the soiree, the meal. His successors are still doing it, exerting immense efforts where none at all would be more apropos; but now they have added sexual intercourse to the roster of experiences to be studied and reproduced. If one artist tells us the doings of a banquet in twenty pages, why should not another serve us as many for the sexual act? And here too the artist seeks to become visual. His words do not convey motives and meanings; they paint pictures. And this is done in loyal duty to the goddess Truth.

Lawrence then (and many like him) does with coitus what Balzac does with supper at the Maison Vauquer. And having produced a series of pictures in our minds—the letters of the alphabet arranging themselves in our brains not as concepts but as images—he obtains, let judges judge as they will, a sexual reaction akin to that provoked by Titian's "Venus and the Organ Player." But Lawrence can be still more provocative: Titian could only present

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a single picture of repose (the movement of paintings being metaphorical); whereas the word-painter, competing with the film rather than with the painter, produces pictures in motion, with all the excitement implied in motion. Subtleties aside, *Lady Chatterley* stands to the pornographic pictures in the same relation as does the Titian. It arouses sexual feelings but arouses them in conjunction with a number of other conceptual and emotional experiences, the latter called "higher" in some quarters. It is a truthful *picture,* and it arouses, among other feelings, sexual desire. The juridical decision, therefore, to exonerate it from this effect, is to be taken as a wise and enlightened circumvention of a silly law.

A silly law? Is it wise or ridiculous to ban works of art, and works of pseudo art, because they arouse the desire to lie with a woman? Lawrence, after all, *meant* his book to promote happy sex throughout the strait-laced West. What would he have thought of the ground on which his book was finally passed? What could be more innocent—in fact, more desirable—than to have his book provoke a joyful lust in young and old? "If this book of mine," he might have cried, "is to be passed and sold on the ground that it does not lead to prurient thoughts, let it be banned again and let me weep in my corner!" His own grounds for banning a book were different, as a footnote in the addendum suggests—a footnote taken from his own essay on Pornography. Pornography, according to this note, is sex made ugly, dirty, nasty; the joyless leer in a back alley over "filthy pictures" instead of the merry swyving under a wide-eyed moon. Even, perhaps, the cerebral discussions about sex—those free and enlightened elucubrations of Sir Clifford's friends over a glass of port—even these may partake of pornography. They are unhealthy at best, although judges may pounce on them as evidence that the novel is "highly serious" and "intellectual." "No," Lawrence would have said, "let *Lady Chatterley* puff away the taboos and the sentimentality which cramp our souls; let young and old abandon themselves to the life of intuition, the wholesome body, the revel of the Bassarid—spite of judges and industrialists and chemists and pornographers—and then the book will have accomplished its high moral purpose."

I do not know whether I am interpreting Lawrence's opinion

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justly, but it does not matter after all. What matters here is that we have got hold of two possible reasons for banning (or merely denouncing) a book—the first, that it conduces to eroticism; the second, that it vilifies the erotic. Of the second charge, it goes without saying, Lawrence is innocent at least in intention. And the first is, in my concurring opinion, no charge at all. If the novel shocks such sensibilities as I profess to have, it is for a reason of a different order altogether. As I progressed through the story, I had the disagreeable sensation of having *my* fondest secrets, and *my* best discoveries exposed to the public. Someone had peeped, had spied on *us*, a woman and myself, and written a report. Our little ways and our little words were now to be made available to every Jack and Jill in the world. My privacy had been pried open.

Naïveté! Did I suppose that I had really invented the art of love? Did I think that any word that I or she uttered, or any act of ours, had never been uttered or done before? Was not Lawrence simply bringing into the open what everybody knows anyway? And if something is a fact, ought it to remain hidden? Is not the artist bound to serve Truth? If anyone had forced me to think about it, I should have admitted that, in all likelihood, whatever we could possibly devise in the way of endearment had been devised before us. But what of it? We were still inventing; our acts were still spontaneous; the world was still ours to discover. Let Columbus withhold the report of his discovery, and America can be found a hundred times again, with the same sense of triumph, the same joy, the same sense of strength—and more: with the same *real* display of strength.

There is a bitter paradox here. Lawrence's very effort to restore us to the spontaneous life is what eventually makes spontaneity impossible. He and his myriad colleagues in the Dissemination of Truth have given us so many manuals of love and sex that we can only stammer after them, and love with book in hand. If the most elementary "I love you" had not been scribbled into every book of our civilization since the Middle Ages, it might have been to the young man and woman an invention and an awesome delight, instead of being the aping of a routine. It was an ill day for mankind when this simplest of the Eleusinian Mysteries was made current

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by a godless servant of the goddess Truth. Every person now has a vocabulary of love assigned to him in advance by novels, films, plays and magazine articles. An emotion has been lost: the emotion of discovery—an irreplaceable sweetness. But eventually we all became tired of this particular information—a few centuries of books had exhausted the thrill of the vocabulary. The next step was to proceed to the act of love itself, and to provide manuals for it. The first approaches were gingerly, but as the tempo of modern life is jazzy, it did not take more than a generation to make the deepest recess of life explicit. By now I am half embarrassed to disclose my embarrassment. Only fools, old prudes and provincial Babbitts dislike total frankness. We are reactionaries; we like to walk about with our eyes bandaged.

And why should sex be kept hidden? Why not conceal the procedures of an agreeable supper? What is there about sex that qualifies it especially for secrecy? The answer is a simple one: sex ought to be kept private because it has been private. And that is all! I make no arguments about the special character of the act, about what is "natural," about calamitous public repercussions. I am perfectly satisfied to hear that in such or such an island the act itself is performed in the open. If dinners had always been taken covertly in our culture, I should deplore public revelations of dinners. *Privacy and mystery are good in themselves.* Such is the principle at stake here, and none other.

I make the obvious qualification that privacy and mystery are not always so. I do not propose pulling the goddess Truth from her altar; only taking a few of her offerings away and bestowing them elsewhere—on the scandalously maltreated demon of Ignorance, for example. We must decide whether there is most harm or most good in a truth before we run outside to make it known. And I do not deny that in most instances, as far as a mortal can predict (no more can be asked), truth is better than ignorance. Nevertheless, even if ignorance is never bliss in itself, it does sometimes make bliss possible when knowledge would kill it. I suggest that the benefits obtained from a full knowledge of the most expert devices of sexual behavior are outweighed by those to be obtained from ignorance—not total ignorance, perhaps, but a moderate ignorance.

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If it is objected that this particular restriction on truth is irrational, I reply that the same objection must be brought against the taboo on the public performance of the sexual act. Gone, after all, are the days when, as the witty historian observes, it had to be enjoyed in the recess of a cave because it left a man defenseless and at the mercy of the enemy. Today we might have a policeman patrol the sex-park as a caution against pickpockets. What keeps the artist from advocating this? Is not sex a beautiful and honest and harmless thing? It must be shame, after all, the very shame of the Methodist housewife. Even Gide seems to have been a little unsettled by the performance of a friend who was enjoying an Algerian boy in his presence. Actually, reason has nothing to do with this question one way or the other. I propose, simply, that the sense of shame is also a good in itself; that it is worth cultivating (well on this side of morbidity, of course) because it magnifies the power of the emotional experiences that it covers. The sense of being alive consists in large part in the sense of being released from bonds and the sense of overcoming an obstacle.

As far as killing the sense of shame is concerned, the film has kept pace with the novel. At first this may seem doubtful, for word-painting has gone much farther into truth than have either the screen or the stage. A man may fondle a woman in a book as he may not do as yet in the film or even in the theater—although the enlightened point with satisfaction to the "progress" made in the last few years by the American movie industry. But the lag is only apparent for the reason I have already suggested—namely, that the sense of sight is more provocative than the imaginary vision that the alphabet induces. It should be noted that if the film seems to lag behind the novel in frankness, it also lags behind the painting. Is not the reason again that the image-in-motion is more exciting than the immobile picture? We arrive, therefore, at a gradation from least to most exciting: word-painting, picture on canvas, and picture in motion (not to mention the actual sound of seductive words); and an inverse gradation of daring: word-painting is most daring, picture on canvas less so, and picture in motion even less. But the upshot is that the film has after all kept up with the novel as far as effect is concerned. Generally speaking, a seductive em-

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brace on stage or on the screen has the same potency as a far more intimate act written into a novel.

For my part, I do not hesitate to say that I dislike the frankness of our motion pictures—kisses, moans and caresses—as much as I dislike the revelations of modern novels. That a scene should titillate I think is no objection against it. But that it should open an experience whose beauty depends so finely on its being closed offends me. Do I need the relativistic anthropologist to teach me that my shame, my blush, my anger are local events—that in Patagonia the natives blush when someone sees a wrist? As I favor shame, I favor the sense of sanctity, of exclusiveness, of preciousness. These are humane emotions, and they distinguish me from the fish in my bowl. It does not matter that their objects are local and adventitious. I do not inquire too closely whether the event that I cover with a sense of awe or shame ought, by this or that standard, or absolutely, to be considered shameful or awesome.

In the Middle Ages truth was to be affirmed; in the ages which followed, it had to be discovered; in our own time, it needs to be tamed. Montaigne seems to have been the last man of his age to doubt the goddess, but even he doubted the possibility of finding her rather than the desirability of keeping her. For myself, I am fully persuaded that man is capable of reaching man's truth, or truth-for-man, and that he has done so. Montaigne himself, while his pen was scratching in his tower, was being refuted in deed by a band of scientific adventurers. The adventure continues. It is a philosophical farce to be skeptical about it today. It has not made man better, wiser or happier—and that is something of a failure—but it has given him truths enough to make a new Pelion from which to dethrone Jupiter. What shall a sane man do? Limit the damage, perhaps; preserve with stubborn affection the few corners to which the glare has not penetrated; cultivate darkness. Where all is darkness, we may well long for the light, as Bacon did. But where all is light, we seek again the refreshing cover of a little darkness. I hope that I am not bringing too much history, or overly grandiose concepts, to bear on the matter of sex. For sex is after all no little matter; it is a subject worthy of metaphysicians. But it was, until recently, one of the few subjects from which men volun-

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tarily withheld the light. Granted that they withheld it for the wrong reason, believing sex to partake of evil, surely there was a consciousness too that it might be well to cover it even though it were not evil. I applaud the liberation that made it possible to return to the problems as well as to the delights of sex; but I deplore the license that allowed every artist to hawk about, for serious or vile motives, the "secrets of the bedroom."

I am not impressed, in any event, with the argument that full frankness (as peeping is called today) is a requisite for the discussion of serious problems. The serious problems can even be handled euphemistically, if need be, although I favor rather the large area of good taste that lies between euphemism and total frankness. The artist ought not to feel that, by forbearing to say all that he could say, he is toadying to the philistines. As for truth, if a novelist can discuss gluttony without detailing the minutiae of a meal, he can discuss sex without tracing every whisper and every movement of the finger. As I favor privacy, mystery, shame and awe for their own sakes, so I favor the vague yet real order known as good taste, and I oppose the pressure that contracts its boundaries. For civilization is partly self-control and discipline, even in areas arbitrarily chosen.

The good taste I speak of concerns itself with the scene-painting of our daring novels; but it will not be too remote a digression if I touch on the famous "four-letter words" with which Lawrence colors the scenes in question, or scenes in which people simply sit and discuss. His intention, I take it, is to call a spade a spade and to unveil that which ought not to have been veiled to begin with. Euphemism, he seems to say, might be used for really shocking subjects (if there are any); but why should a thing beautiful, sane and virtuous—as sex is—be treated with the tergiversations of an old maid's vocabulary? Let us call clean things by true names.

Lawrence's honesty, unfortunately, consists in a futile endeavor to reform wicked words simply by placing them in good company. He had at his disposal four classes of words to describe sexual union: medical or technical terms, which are cold or unpleasant; words or phrases "in good taste"—like the "sexual union" I have just used; euphemisms, which are usually terms with other, harm-

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less meanings extended for the nonce (like the charming "foregather" used by the translator of Boccaccio); and words that give a nasty coloring to the act—not only the "Anglo-Saxon" ones, but others as well—"fornication," for instance. The literary craftsman does not hope to create radically new associations by a dazzling wish one fine morning. He can sometimes do it, true enough, with new words or with words whose associations are weak; but he cannot do it with heavily charged words like those at issue here. Lawrence may deplore the nasty implications of the four-letter words, admire their honesty, and wish they could be used freely and joyously. But nasty they remain: our associations are ineluctable; and the good artist, far from fighting them, profits from them as they are. When our hero and heroine use words we associate strongly with bestiality, with the back alley, with the delinquents of society, with scribblings in washrooms and the like, it is not they who purify the words (as Lawrence no doubt hoped), but the words which soil them. The result is precisely what Lawrence intended to fight, namely the vilification of sex. At least the words cause a pressure of ugliness. If the scenes still succeed in glorifying sex—and they do —it is by exerting a successful counter-pressure, by winning over the words. There is only one situation in which the artist ought to dare the use of an "unpleasant" word when he is trying to achieve a "pleasant" effect: where agreeable words do not exist. Faced with the alternatives of using clumsy, sentimental or funny circumlocutions and remaining silent altogether, he can be excused for venturing to impose on his audience a new series of associations. It is possible that Lawrence ran into this difficulty with regard to the sexual organs. But it is not a difficulty that attends the naming of the sexual act.

The question is, finally, whether privacy and mystery are really worth-while things; and again, whether difficulty is a good thing, and whether discovery is a good thing. A few years ago, the American government with more kindness (or policy) than wisdom ferried a multitude of Moslem pilgrims to Mecca by plane. Nobody seemed to understand that the whole virtue of the pilgrimage consisted in the effort to be made against obstacles. The physical union of man and woman is another Mecca. We all know that habitual

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excess stales it, as it stales every other pleasure. We know, if we have been fortunate, that the initiation into it is a great wonder and discovery. It is one of the last rites left to us. To paraphrase Voltaire, if there were no mystery, it would have to be invented. Each union of man and woman, if it has not been preplanned by romances and manuals, directives and counselors, is an act of creation. It is perfectly startling. Hence it acquires an *importance* which is denied to the too-familiar. Should man possess the emotion appropriate to importance? Or is it better for him to feel that everything is "absurd" and to suffer the emotional death of some character in Camus or Sartre? It is strange that Lawrence should be accused of bringing about emotional death! Yet this is the result of that grand revolt against Victorianism, which fills us with so much pride. Not only bureaucracy, not only the totalitarian state, but also the art of our century is guilty of destroying man's sense of individual life. Everybody knows everybody; everybody knows everything. What I whisper to my mistress, I read in Lawrence's novels. Big Brother is not the only one watching me from a screen in my home; the artist too follows me about with his pad. Nothing is strange. One by one, under the stare of the goddess Truth, emotions die: the sense of awe, the sense of importance, the sense of discovery, the sense of mystery.

These emotions, I insist, are not illusions. The sense of strangeness is appropriate not only to the unknowable, but also to the unknown; and it ought to be a matter of choice for us, in some cases at least, whether a thing shall be known or not. The sense of importance, too, is seldom illusory; it is a purely human and relative term, and it should be respected as such. The thrill of discovery is correctly felt by each man who does his own discovering, no matter how many times the discovery has already been made. Illusion has its value, but ignorance has a greater one. The Baconian axiom, admirable in its time, was that everything which is knowable should be known, and everything which is known should be made known. We, on the other hand, should hoard the secrets that are left, and, before we answer a question, look carefully lest the answer take away our strength while it gives us light.

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Growing

WILLIAM GIBSON

When I was childish
Daylight lay over my city, dusk I had none,
I grew in the eye of my father,
Sole as the sun.

Sunset I grew by
Twilit my tenement so, in that eyeless town
I took the moon for a wife.
The moon is down.

Now I grow manly
My lights are behind me, a humped and malign
Shadow falls over the city:
Look, it is mine.

✪ WILLIAM GIBSON is the author of three plays, *Two for the Seesaw*, *Dinny and the Witches* and *The Miracle Worker*, which received the Antoinette Perry Award for the Best Play of 1959. He also has written *Winter Crook*, a book of poems; *The Cobweb*, a novel; and *The Seesaw Log*, a theater chronicle.

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The American Concept of Home

EARL H. ROVIT

A HISTORIC AMERICAN PROBLEM, which has become universal for Western man in our century, has centered around the difficulties of establishing a settlement in the wilderness, of wresting out of the chaos and flux of life a secure dwelling place for the spirit—a home, a community, a civilization. One way of designating the problem in terms almost small enough for the imagination to grasp might be to refer to it as the problem of making houses into homes; but even this simplification leaves areas of complexity that our present knowledge of human behavior can hardly fathom. Accordingly, I readily admit the tentativeness of my exploration, even as I declare its most ambitious aims—nothing less than the hope of pointing a direction toward a more precise understanding of the cultural complex in which we live and by which we are so powerfully conditioned.

We know now in the mid-twentieth century, as we have never so consciously known before, that there are few idea clusters as central to the creative consciousness as that of *home—home* with its inevitable and integral associations of wombs, tombs, mothers, hearths, security, order, et cetera—all the accoutrements of remembered and idealized emotions out of which the creative mind compounds its values and standards, and not only the values that energize the deepest rhythms in the compositions of poems and paintings, but also those that motivate and profoundly inform the particular configuration of social and ideological patterns to which the group mind subscribes. The concept of home, as I see it, may be regarded as one of the major structuring forces of the human

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psyche, basic not only to the individual's search for and sense of identity, but fundamental, as well, to the group's collective attempt to achieve a cohesive image of itself. All cultures, insofar as they attempt to survive and perpetuate themselves, will naturally accumulate layers of customs, institutions, habitual sanctions and prohibitions—in a word, *traditions*—that will function as archives of operative values and monuments of continuity. A culture can refer to this ever-shifting image of itself in an effort to maintain its dynamic equilibrium and find support to meet the stresses of the changing moment. And because the concept of home plays a dual role in men's lives, functioning simultaneously as a cogent, shaping force and a psychologically static ideal, it presents an especially valuable field of examination in which to observe the cultural characteristics of any relatively definable group or community.

Our American culture, of course, differs manifestly from other major contemporary cultures in being a transplant, a hybrid, an artificial creation that quite contentedly terms itself an "experiment" rather than a natural growth. And note the word "experiment" implies some degree of conscious control, a human responsibility for the action and results of the process, as well as a deep-lying assumption that the process can be interfered with, diverted or even discontinued at will. There are, therefore, in the historic backgrounds of this American experiment no fathering gods, no mythological engenderings, no national epics, ballads or legends, no generic traditions and value structures with roots running too deeply in the subsoil of the past for the heart or the head to deny. By the very nature of things this culture has always lacked —and has always felt strongly the lack of—a cumulative system of responses to which it could appeal in the making of decisions and in the judging of events. It has, that is, always lacked a native *home*, and also by the very nature of things, it has always been obsessively concerned with the urge to create homes or to find some transcendent substitute for them.

As good a starting place as any for our inquiry may be found in the dialogue of Robert Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man." The wife, with what may be a basic feminine reluctance to accept

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the possibilities of rootlessness and insecurity, defines "home" as "the place where, when you have to go there,/ They have to take you in." This suggests that there *is* such a place and all one has to do is search hard enough to discover it. The husband, however, more cynical, more enigmatic, and, I think, more characteristically American, says: "I should have called it/ Something you somehow haven't to deserve." Now the only things men "somehow haven't to deserve" are things either inherently their own by birthright, or things that become possessions by the force of their own making. "Home" for the husband, then, is not a place that exists externally somewhere awaiting discovery, but a place that has been or has to be organically created and continually re-created by an effort of the individual imagination.

Let us recall for a moment the salient fact of the American experience. From 1607 to about 1917, and probably past that date, the dominant habit of American life has been movement—migration first from the Old World to the New, and migration unceasingly since within the shifting social context of the New World. This movement, characterized by a mobility not only through geographical space, but also through the intangible barriers of class and caste, has made permanence, solidity and rootedness anomalies in the American scene, artificially achieved on a temporary basis under certain conditions (most dramatically in the ante-bellum South), but achieved only to be destroyed by time and resurrected by nostalgia. "I shall call that my country," wrote the young John Winthrop, "where I may most glorify God and enjoy the presence of my dearest friends." In effect, says Winthrop, I shall create my own home; I shall assemble my own values and standards and traditions, and in this Walden-Innisfree of my spirit I shall live forever. Unfortunately, in the long run, the spirit tends to be an unsatisfactory construction company and American homes of the spirit have a most uncomfortable habit of falling apart, burning, sliding into rivers, or moldering into decay.

When, for example, we examine American fiction with this concept in mind, we discover an unbroken chronicle of such real estate disasters from Brockden Brown's plague-ridden Philadelphia to the

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motel-hoppings of Vladimir Nabokov. The House of Usher, the House of the Seven Gables, Silas Lapham's new house on the waterside of Beacon Street, Melville's Saddle Meadows, Henry James's Poynton, Cable's Belles Demoiselles Plantation, Gatsby's palatial residence on Long Island, the Joad family farm in Oklahoma, the Faulknerian houses of Sutpen, Compson or Joanna Burden—all these make very poor insurance risks where one might glorify God or enjoy the presence of one's dearest friends. And the sheer preponderance of destruction to or corruption of these American homes suggests that these are something more than the mere disasters that a facile manipulation of plots might call into being. The deliberate destruction of these homes seems to me to symbolize consciously or unconsciously the failure of a cumulative past—the failure of the values and inherited responses of an older way of meeting crises that must be discarded in the face of new conditions. In the paintings of Charles Burchfield and Walter Stuempfig we even find ready-made illustrations of the fictional houses of American literature on the verge of sinking into the dank tarns of history. Some of these doomed homes are regretfully consigned to a lingering decrepitude under the auspices of the local antiquarian society; others are ripped down with the joyful enthusiasm that accompanies a slum clearance project. But destroyed they all are, and the challenge is sent to the new unhouseled spirit to build again—on firmer foundations.

I suppose that all cultures have an inbred need to protect and venerate any specimens of agedness, but surely the American nature is excessively prone to such behavior. One of our basic industries is the enshrinement of old things—the attempt to manufacture "genuine reproductions" of authentic obsolescence. Our vacations are carefully defined in terms of an educational itinerary of sacred places—My Old Kentucky Home, Paul Revere's House, Wayside Inn, Old Manse, Monticello, Boot Hill—and there is hardly a community that does not point with pride to its venerable house or family or inn or legend, which may vary in age from fifty to three hundred years. This, it seems to me, is different from the European Grand Tour, and different from a somewhat ludicrous

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imitation of the European Baedeker. I think it is an inevitable effort that Americans must make, having attempted to impose a civilization on a physical wilderness, only to discover that the physical wilderness, when conquered, was replaced by an even more formidable and pervasive metaphysical wilderness.

It has been frequently pointed out in recent years that the American is most characteristically involved in striving to satisfy his individual need for self-definition, that he is constantly attempting to find an adequate answer to the question "Who am I?" It can be argued that American literature is, in a special sense, most obsessively a literature of autobiography, of songs and curses of myself. And, typically, these autobiographies are not so much the analytical descriptions of a self as they are the literal creations of a self. American writers—Emerson, Melville, Hemingway, Hart Crane—do not create their poems out of their experience, but, rather, the reverse: they create or realize their experience in the very making of their poems. And if we regard the fact of wilderness in the proper light, we can see how this must necessarily be so. Without traditions and solidly rooted social forms, the American is adrift in a very real wilderness; or, to use a more highly charged phrase, he is abandoned to chaos. His freedom of movement is itself a major cause of his isolation. "Home," writes T. S. Eliot, who has traveled farther than most, "is where one starts from." The American must define himself, must somehow manage to put ends and limits to his sense of self, or drown in the vast seas of dissociation that bring Melville's Pip beyond the edge of sanity. Thus arises the need to create and even sanctify homes—the most natural symbolic containers of value and meaning—and the consequent compulsion to destroy these homes as soon as they cease to be adequate operational guides for the living moment. And they will inevitably fail to be adequate, for although built once to house an organic need, they are themselves static; and as the organism grows, it must burst the restraining limits of a definition that no longer applies.

But this, however, is only one method of dealing with the problem, and there is a strong alternate current running through

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American history. Instead of abortively constructing homes that must later be destroyed, there has also been a persistent attitude that denies the need for a home entirely. For example, it cannot be strictly accidental that the most vigorous school of American painters until World War I were the marine painters—a rich tradition that found its culmination in Winslow Homer, Marsden Hartley and John Marin. In the characteristic works of this school, the human figure is used, if at all, merely as a yardstick by which to measure the grandeur and immensity of nature. Our single internationally recognized architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, paralleling Le Corbusier, has defined a home as "a machine to live in," and his theories of "organic simplicity" have profoundly influenced both the interiors and exteriors of American houses. His doctrines of "interior spaciousness" and harmony between structure and topography, when carried to illustrative extremes as in Taliesin or the famous Fallingwater House, succeed in obliterating almost completely a distinctive existence to a home. By themselves these facts would be little more than interesting oddities, but when we search through the works of Emerson, Thoreau or Whitman, certainly "classic" American writers, for passages extolling the values of established domesticity, we search in vain.

Wright's description of the home as "a living machine" could have been culled directly from Thoreau, who grudgingly admits the temporary necessity of "Shelter" but is urgently concerned with reminding us that "birds do not sing in caves, nor do doves cherish their innocence in dovecots." Nowhere that I can discover does Emerson accept the traditional limitations of home, nor, concomitantly, any restrictions to the potential expansions of his own *self*. A home in the traditional sense for Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman would mean an arbitrary cessation of growth and a denial of life for the vital American spirit. Theirs is most triumphantly a song of the open road—a road which must be traveled forever with no more than idle tarryings at the wayside. And the individual traveler—the American—is seen in this current of American literature and painting as man against the sky, man in the open air, exposed directly to the vast elemental forces of nature

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without the cover of houses or social institutions or established traditions over his head. If he is to have a home, it can be nothing less than the entire universe; and if he is to be at home, he must be at one with all time and space.

Nor should this attitude be regarded as specifically related to the romantic or transcendentalist influences on American thought. Home denial appears too frequently and too consistently throughout all areas and levels of American history to be adequately explained away as a product of Rousseauistic naturism. It strikes me as far from coincidental that the Pullman car and the luxurious automobile with all the peripheral materials and customs of transiency that they spawn—superhighways, motels, subdivisions, processed foods, credit cards, et cetera—should have been invented or most energetically encouraged in American life. These technological and social commodities testify on their level to the same eager acceptance of rootlessness and wandering isolation that our many imaginative incarnations of Huckleberry Finn proclaim on the literary level. Since the historic trek of Roger Williams from Salem to Providence in the bitter cold January of 1636, an army of American fictional heroes have been traveling in Williams' footsteps, but unlike him, never quite making it to Providence. Natty Bumppo goes a-westering with his musket and faithful hound Hector; young Goodman Brown leaves his pink-ribboned wife Faith for the fascination of the wilderness; Ishmael deserts the insular city of the Manhattoes to sail about a little and see the watery part of the world; Nick Adams hops freights from Upper Michigan to Caporetto; old Uncle Ike McCaslin rejects his family inheritance to drag his iron cot and lean mattress into the dwindling but unconquered Delta.

And it is false to consider these characters as traditional picaresque heroes, unless the American experience itself be regarded as a giant picaresque novel; they are truly representative heroes, mythic participants in an experiment that is constantly unfolding. They travel light, denying the constraint of settlement and home, because the universe in its totality is weight enough for them to bear. They tend to be bachelors—if not legally, almost always

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spiritually—because the love and hatred that they generate can settle for no less a bride than the cosmos itself. And their movement is not, as it is sometimes erroneously thought, a primitivistic escape to nature; it may in some cases be tinged with this, but it is predominantly a deliberate attempt to find an irreducible sphere of identity for themselves without lodging that identity in external forms that inevitably must crack.

On a lower level of imaginative intensity, the same direction can be noted in the productions of our popular arts. The modern motion-picture and television cowboy, as well as his urban counterpart, the "private eye" (and what a wonderfully comic parody is that phrase on the ideals of Emersonian individualism), repeat with unvarying formula the activities of their literary betters. Like them they are rooted in no single place or regulatory code of social ethics. They act pragmatically outside the law in accordance with an intuitively apprehended higher law. They also are "loners," and they also tend to perform their dramatic feats of heroism against a stark, unrelieved background of impersonal elemental forces. As Henry Nash Smith has pointed out, the entrance scene of Leather-Stocking in *The Prairie* has become the fixed image of the cowboy story, and if one merely changes the cowboy clothes to a gray flannel suit, and the glowing sunset background to a haze of neon and cigarette smoke, Natty Bumppo swiftly becomes Peter Gunn or any of his proliferating brothers.

A brief and necessarily superficial glance at the structure of American politics ought to suffice to suggest that the action of this concept is not found exclusively in the area of American arts. The lack of symmetry in American politics, which is the bane of the "purist" political scientist, seems to me integrally related to this combination search for and denial of home. The system of a radical and shifting division of powers and responsibilities among the three branches of the federal government, as well as the bewildering network of conflicting powers and responsibilities on the state and local levels, could conceivably have operated in the model of British empiricism. But when one couples with this system the thorough lack of ideological responsibility that is characteristic of

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American political parties, we are fronted with something that looks astonishingly like the successful establishment of institutionalized chaos. The tendency of American government throughout our history, home-denier Thoreau notwithstanding, has always been a dynamic one—greedily acquisitive for new areas of control. The Constitution, surely the most sacred household god of the American spirit, has served as an icon with as many hieroglyphic wrinkles in its pages as were enigmatically graven on Moby Dick's forehead. And each votary who has knelt before the holy text has managed to read there the message that he sought. "The Constitution is what the judges say it is," pronounced Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes; and, in a similar sense, the Constitution, or law of the land, is whatever a powerful executive or a powerful Congress is able to make it when in control.

But although the result has been a continually changing image of government, the new changes are built out of the old without completely eradicating the old. The house of government grows thus like old New England farmhouses where one can chronicle the good years by the new additions of rooms. The sense of experiment and the need of new forms to satisfy new demands have made the structure of American government deceptively sprawling and jerry-built. When Abraham Lincoln proclaimed that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," his choice of rhetoric was remarkably shrewd; but, at the same time, he was politician enough to realize that the American house of government functions as well as it does *because* it is divided against itself—the antagonistic components contributing their weight of self-interest or protest in such a way as to achieve a workable equilibrium out of which practical decisions can be made on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps the house had to fall once to prove to the nation that it should never fall again. But house it remains, not home, constantly changing, in constant internal division, and, so far at least, strong in its pragmatic flexibility.

Although the physical frontier closed in the late nineteenth century, Americans are still faced with the problem of making houses into homes. The collapse of the established hierarchy of

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values that served as bedrock for Western civilization has made metaphysical chaos the pervasive intellectual environment for the whole Western world. But the American mind already possesses a long history of indoctrination in one possible solution to both the individual and society's needs for secure roots. And this is the home built by the creative consciousness, projected out of pragmatic experience by the power of the imagination. Whether it is the literary dream of "The Great Good Place" or "The Clean Well-Lighted Place," or whether it is the social myth of "The Open Road" where arrival at destination will bring all good things to pass, it is a dream or a myth that has worked. The literary dream has worked because the ideal place of "cleanness and order"—the "insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy"—has always been placed within and not outside the frenzy and disorder of the changing moment; within the very process of experience itself has been posited an ideal of creative repose. There is at the heart of American pragmatism a core that change cannot destroy because it draws its essential substance from change itself. The builders of our dreams and myths have built solidly because they have instinctively focused on the act of building rather than on the ideal results. And because they have built with passion and faith, even though our houses are not yet homes, they have served admirably *as homes* in proportion to the passion and faith that give them their form.

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Thanks to a gift from a generous foundation the University of Arizona recently has been able to buy an electron microscope. A number of institutions now have them; and wherever one is put into operation scientists working in many different fields queue up, waiting their turn to give the camera a peek at something so inconceivably small that no one has ever been able to see it, even indirectly, before.

More than half a century ago the optical microscope was perfected to the point that it had actually reached the theoretical limit of resolution set by the wave length of light. It was commonly assumed that we should never be able to see or to photograph anything that a magnification of something like two thousand diameters was not sufficient to make visible to the eye. Now beautiful, sharp photographs more than a hundred thousand times larger than life are routine; and although the theoretical limits have not yet been reached, the difference between what the best an optical microscope can do and what the electron microscope is theoretically capable of is as great as the difference between the naked eye and the best "old-fashioned" microscope. Atoms are still too small to be seen, but many molecules are not. The flu virus, which a few years ago was something that could only be inferred, can now have its picture taken: it turns out to be a homely, harmless looking sphere, with a curious tail two or three times the length of the sphere's diameter. Its innocent appearance is no great surprise, for the relatively gigantic bacillus of Asiatic cholera looks no more alarming.

All this interests me somewhat more than it does most other laymen simply because I have never entirely given up the habit acquired in boyhood of spending a few hours every now and then with an optical microscope as good as I have any business owning. I am unlikely to change over to the electron because the technique is for specialists only and also because the instruments come rather high—forty or fifty thousand dollars for a reasonably good one, I am told. There is, moreover, a theoretical aspect of the whole business that interests me even more because it relates to a situation I find myself pondering from time to time, and called to mind again by a few sentences in the introduction to a recent book entitled *The World of the Electron Microscope* (Yale University Press) by Ralph W. G. Wyckoff, one of the great technical experts.

The scientist has, he points out, come to be more and more dependent upon instruments that enable him to deal with things inaccessible to any of the five senses. Until quite recently the most important of such instruments—notably the telescope and the microscope—merely extended the *range* of sight, giving us what are, in effect, merely better eyes. The world which they reveal is the same world we see with our own visual sense and is apprehended in the same way. Moreover, this is almost equally true of the electron microscope. Although it is, like the great telescopes, most effective when used to take photographs that the eye then examines, the photographs are recognizable images like those formed by the eye itself.

On the other hand, most of the other new instruments upon which the scientist has been compelled to depend in his efforts to penetrate deeper and deeper into the secrets of the physical universe are of a different kind. The cloud chamber and even the Geiger counter do no more than enable the

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physicist to *infer* the existence of the particles with which they deal. The traces left on a photographic plate by cosmic rays are not images of the particles responsible for them but merely tracks. And because we are getting so far from what can be seen, touched or smelled, it becomes increasingly difficult for the physicist to construct, on the basis of his inferences, even a theoretical model understandable in visual or tactile terms. Light is a wave, or a particle, or neither, or both. In despair he may be driven to say, as some have said, that reality is simply incomprehensible and unimaginable—which may, in part, mean that it can only be inferred from, never really perceived by, the senses that our minds must use to form even a mental image.

It is something of this kind, I think, that Wyckoff has in mind when he contrasts the electron microscope with other recent instruments. "The world of invisible radiations revealed is an enlargement of the world our eyes actually see and not a fundamentally different one; and we can interpret what they show in long-familiar ways without the possibilities of error that are always present with those more elegant forms of experimentation where the observation is several intellectual steps removed from the explanatory picture to which it points."

It may seem to be stretching a point to speak of photographic images of a virus magnified seventy thousand times or of a group of protein molecules magnified one hundred and ten thousand times as part of the common-sense world. But what Wyckoff is saying is that, in actual fact, they are much nearer to this common-sense world than much with which the modern physicist finds himself compelled to deal and, sometimes, to attempt to explain to the layman who is now becoming more thoroughly convinced than at any time since the supernatural went out of fashion that things are far from being what they seem.

I do not think it is an overinterpretation to say that Wyckoff finds reassurance in the common-sense aspect of the electron microscope in an age that finds itself compelled to attach less and less importance to what it can see, hear or feel. Moreover, it is upon this lessening importance of the world of sense and of some of the consequences of it that I find myself often speculating.

The human mind, imagination and spirit did, after all, develop in a world of consciousness generated by our senses where what things *seem* is much more important than what they *are*. Even today we lead our ordinary lives in accord with the assumptions of what Santayana called "animal faith"; and animal faith is, essentially, the assumption that things are what they seem. Our most intimate and personal decisions and actions are directed by, and our most vivid emotional experiences (including the aesthetic) are based upon, an acceptance of it. Yet while this continues to be true, we are increasingly aware that animal faith is almost wholly a delusion—at least in the opinion of what seem to be the profoundest intellects of our time. We "know" that the sun doesn't rise, that roses are not really red, and that solid objects are not solid. Nevertheless, the rising sun, the red rose and the solid earth we tread have been, at least until now, the most real parts of our actual experience.

According to one theory of history, the degree to which a civilization may be called "advanced" is measured by the amount of power it has at its disposal. Although we command power to an extent that would have been unimaginable at any previous time, we summon it by the exercise of abstract thought, and it appears (or rather doesn't actually "appear" at all) in the form of invisible forces and fluids. We used to see the water wheel working until we exchanged it for the somewhat less obvious steam engine, and then exchanged the steam engine for the electric motor that goes round and round for no visible reason. The vacuum tube in which almost nothing seems to be happening gives way to the transistor that performs its miracles soundlessly, without motion or any visible or audible activity. So far as any naïve observer can see, it is pure hocus-pocus—not technology but mere magic. To most of those who snap switches and push buttons it is all as mys-

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terious as it would be if they were summoning genii by rubbing a lamp. Even the engineer or the theoretical physicist lives in a world which is retreating further and further from the reach of the five senses that remain useful chiefly, not to make any direct contact with his world, but merely to read the instruments by means of which that world may be inferred.

A Helen Keller, blind and deaf, learned to infer what the world of the normal human being is like from signals reaching her consciousness from the blankness of a space without light or sound; and so far as what we now believe "reality" to be we are all in a somewhat similar situation, clutching at such tenuous data as the streaks left by a particle on a photographic plate or inferring from the slight displacement of the red band in a spectroscope that nebulae a billion light years away are rushing farther onward at some meaningless speed.

Moreover our increasing willingness to assume that things are very different from what they seem is not confined to the nature of the physical universe. Animal faith assures us, for example, that we know our own minds and that our consciousness is the most real and most trustworthy part of ourselves. But we are told, are coming to believe, and are trying more and more to act upon the contrary assumption: namely, that our unconsciousness is a larger and often a more important part of ourselves; that our decisions are not made for the reasons we think we make them; that our desires are not what we believe them to be; and that our likes or dislikes are not based upon the rational sense of value by which they seem to us to be justified.

What the more sociological aspects of "the science of man" tell us about ourselves is almost equally at variance with what seems to be. The uniqueness that is so important to us, and that we think we recognize only somewhat less vividly in others, is declared to be also largely an illusion. We and they are said to think and feel and want in accordance with the patterns of our class. Our sense of what is right and proper, good taste and bad, is the prejudice of our culture. And yet, so far as our conscious life is concerned, the reverse is true. We feel that we have the power of choice, that we are virtuous or wicked, refined or coarse. And the more we accept the statement that all this is a delusion, the greater the conflict between animal faith and intellectual conviction. Our consciousness, so we are asked to believe, is as misleading as our senses, and what the mind seems to be is as different as physical reality from what the one and the other really are. Yet it is even more difficult to accept wholly and without conflict the substitution of this view of "things as they really are" for our animal faith in things as they seem than it is to agree wholly and without conflict with the physicists who tell us that our senses have misled us absurdly when we accept the version of physical reality that these senses have foisted upon us.

In some respects our situation is rather like that of the men who lived in "the age of faith" when they also were told and they tried to believe that they too ought to live, not by animal faith in the reality of things as they seem, but by a religious faith in the unseen drama of God versus the Devil, and the claims of this world versus the claims of the next. Yet their example affords but dubious assistance since history suggests that, a few holy men excepted, they acted most of the time as though they did not really believe what they professed. Can we or should we attempt to do more? What sort of adjustment will we ultimately make?

One possible answer is "Let us cultivate our garden"—in a sense more far-reaching than Voltaire had in mind. Let us, in other words, live our lives, cultivate our emotions and make our value judgments in terms of the world as our sense-limited minds and imaginations present it to us. If that world is more real to us than the world of things-as-they-are, then we can live most successfully in that less real world which is also the world of many of the most resplendent creators and teachers civilization has ever known.

So far as our own inner experience and much of our relationship with other human

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beings is concerned, this is a practical solution, and it has had some support from some of the leading philosopher-scientists of the present day. At least it is, I take it, something like what is in the minds of James B. Conant and P. W. Bridgman. Speaking of the attempt to unify physical science, biology, psychology, sociology and ethics, Conant once said, "My preference would be for more adequate exploration of limited areas of experience." More recently Bridgman, in his subtle and far-ranging book *The Way Things Are,* seems to reach much the same conclusion when he suggests that psychology and sociology have failed (and probably always will fail) in their attempt to achieve the kind of objectivity that would make them analagous to the physical sciences; that they fail just because we cannot deal with man without recognizing the importance of man-as-he-seems to himself, however different we may believe that to be from man as merely a part of some total physical reality.

Such answers as these to one aspect of the question leave even those willing to accept them still faced with the other aspect of the question, namely, that of how to live philosophically as well as practically with the unthinkable physical universe of the physicists. And to that question an answer diametrically opposite to "Let us cultivate our garden" is sometimes given. "Let us," say those who give it, "cease cherishing a nostalgia for the garden from which we have been exiled and which was, after all, something less than a paradise." Man's intellect, they go on, is greater than either his senses or his emotions. Why should he not be glad to live more and more in it and to welcome increasing abstraction if it leads him into a clearer, purer reality than that of the Platonic cave to which he has always been confined? Pure intellect works even in technology; and the time may come when supermen, freed from sense and passion, have become indeed like gods who need no longer disturb their contemplation of the ineffable even to the extent of pushing a button, for by then they will be capable of merely thinking into action whatever apparatus may still be necessary to supply any residual physical needs.

Something like this seems to have been Bernard Shaw's vision at the end of *Back to Methuselah.* If I ask, by way of objection, who really wants to be a Shavian Ancient, I suppose I might be met with the counter question, "What ape, if asked, would have said that he wanted to be a man?" To that I know no fully satisfactory reply, although I still feel that my proper home is under the dome of many-colored glass rather than where I should be dazzled by the white radiance of eternity. There is too much of the past and present of man I should hate to give up. And if that is merely an anticipatory nostalgia for the cave, I can say only that I feel already the nostalgic twinge.

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Portrait

A. O. Lovejoy: Reason-in-Action

GEORGE BOAS

Portraits should be painted by men who do not know their sitters. For if one knows a man, one is likely to love or to hate him, and neither emotion leads to that objectivity which is supposed to produce a true likeness. Why those traits of a man that make you like or dislike him are not true parts of his nature I do not know; for, after all, a man is in part what others see in him, and the only really objective portraits I have ever seen are those dismal effigies hung in libraries and schoolrooms where no one looks at them. Let me then frankly admit that this portrait of Lovejoy is not objective. It is painted with both admiration and affection, not by a cool outside observer, but by someone who for thirty-five years has worked beside his sitter, at times under his direction and always with his help. There have been moments when his junior was annoyed with him, but never because of unfairness or cruelty. As one of his former students, Professor Ray Dotterer, once said, Lovejoy is essentially reason-in-action, and rational action is easier to understand than to enjoy.

If I have hyphenated the three words in this short phrase, it is because one cannot understand Lovejoy by equating him with contemplation or with Dionysiac action. When there has been a good fight to be fought, he has been out ahead of the front line, chief of staff, enthusiastic captain and, when necessary, lone champion. It was he who first thought of and organized the Association of American University Professors, won its first battle, investigated the first case himself, and defined in masterful language the meaning of academic freedom. When some saw Hitler as merely a crazy mob-leader or a harmless orator, Lovejoy stood up and denounced him as a dangerous criminal. His speech "Hitler as Pacifist" was one of the earliest analyses of Nazi strategy, and although the analysis was coldly rational, its purpose was a call to action. In 1940, when many Americans felt that they could save their skins by neutrality, Lovejoy rallied a group of younger colleagues around him, formed the Maryland Chapter of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, rolled up his sleeves and went to work. There could have been few chapters of that committee with so much talent in their ranks, physiologists, librarians, classicists, advertising men, physicians, lawyers, businessmen, all busy writing and making speeches, and always under the direction of the philosopher-king. To have seen Lovejoy at his desk in the committee rooms well downtown near the Baltimore harbor, his white hair bristling, his sharp tongue snapping, to have attended those lunches at the nearest hotel that turned into strategy meetings, merely to have stuffed envelopes for him, was one of those great experiences that

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✪ A friend and colleague of A. O. Lovejoy for almost forty years, GEORGE BOAS succeeded him as chairman of the department of philosophy at Johns Hopkins University. Mr. Boas was appointed professor of the history of philosophy in 1933, a post he held until his retirement in 1957. Andrew Mellon Professor at the University of Pittsburgh for the present academic year, his latest book, *The Limits of Reason*, will be published this fall.

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prove that no man is ever all of a piece, like a purified chemical substance. This philosopher who could find sixty-odd meanings in the commonplace word *Nature* could also detect the multiple capacities of a man or woman and utilize them to the best advantage. He would have no truck with ambiguity or vagueness and could spot a fallacy at a hundred yards. But all this was no more than a continuation of his practice as a young professor at Stanford when he locked horns with David Starr Jordan over the famous Ross affair.

It is never very pleasant, I grant, to be shown up as a fallacious thinker. Nevertheless it is good for one's soul. Yet some of us at times have preferred to remain in ignorance of our logical weaknesses and have turned upon Lovejoy as "merely a destructive critic." Unfortunately logical diseases are not so easily destroyed as all that, and it must be admitted that in spite of his attacks on sentimentalism and all forms of anti-intellectualism, the proponents of such doctrines have refused to lie down and die. Sometimes when he has whipped out his knife and dissected an idea into its elemental parts, it has been more fun to be a spectator than a participant. I remember being at a dinner with him when a Senator from France of equal critical ability asked him whether he thought that Hitler was intelligent. This was not a term which one could throw at Lovejoy and expect him to catch it without a return. "It all depends," he said, "on what you mean by *intelligent*." Thereupon, to the consternation of the hostess and the delight of the host, followed a discourse on the various kinds of intelligence, each illustrated brilliantly, a discourse which showed extraordinary skill in preserving the semicolon in conversation, while the maid hovered nervously in the background, waiting to remove the plates. When it was finally evident that Lovejoy had completed his analysis, the Senator said, "I am simply asking you whether you think he is intelligent in the ordinary sense of that word." The maid's intervention prevented a return to the argument.

On another occasion, which I had the misfortune to miss, he was being interrogated by a committee of the Maryland Senate to see whether he was fit to be confirmed as a member of the State University's Board of Regents. Here the spark that set off the reaction was the question of whether he believed in God. I am reliably informed that in reply he developed at length thirty-three definitions of the word *God*, consuming fifteen and a half cigarettes meanwhile, refusing to be interrupted or ruffled, and ended by asking the committee member which of these meanings he had in mind when putting the question. It is perhaps needless to point out that he was confirmed unanimously and immediately, for no one dared ask him anything more.

Although his facial expression on such occasions, at least on those at which I have been present, is serious, I am confident that he has seen the humor of his remarks as much as any of us. Nor has he used his sense of the laughable merely to show up others. Since we are indulging in anecdotes, I may as well tell one more. When my children were very young, he used to drop in to call on them in the late afternoon. They were not alone in admiring him, for he has a way of making contact with the innocent mind and has always had a number of young friends. One day he arrived as they were having their supper and was told firmly by the elder child that they were engaged: their mother was reading *The House at Pooh Corner* to them. "Well," said the Professor of Philosophy, "I can read too." "Yes, you can read, but when Mother or Father reads to us, we are all characters in the story." (Those members of Phi Beta Kappa who have not completed their education may not know that these characters are more or less easily recognizable animal types.) Lovejoy picked up the book, while the two children stopped eating and looked anxious. "I have found the one I can be," he said, "Owl." And he straightway became Owl and went on reading where the children's mother had left off.

As a matter of fact he is not owlish at all. Anyone who had heard his sermon to

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Tony, the fox terrier which he had given the children for Christmas, on the evil of killing chickens would realize his eminent insight into the foibles of moral sermonizers. Poor Tony sat there with his head between the lecturer's knees, looking very guilty, as well he might, and did not kill another chicken for three days. But if I begin to tell stories about Lovejoy and children, I should become embarrassingly maudlin.

My first meeting with Lovejoy was in 1921, as I passed through Baltimore on my way to France. He had written me that there was an opening for me at Johns Hopkins teaching freshmen how to use their heads, that he had already procured sufficient evidence of my fitness for the position, but that I would do well to suggest a few more names of people who knew me which "could be presented to the Trustees" in support of my candidacy. He ended by saying that if I wished to come to Baltimore and talk to him about the position this would be agreeable to him. One's first impression of him in 1921 was that of a man who was supposed to be terrifying, but he was not terrifying at all. He was short, rather stocky in those days, with a crop of white hair standing upright. His speech was, and still is, staccato; and perhaps it is his ability to snatch his end of a dialogue without hesitation that has given people the idea that they ought to be frightened of him. It is true that he has never tolerated gross exaggeration, vagueness, dogmatism in conversation, and I have heard him arrest a sentence in mid-passage when a term or idea was to his way of thinking too loose a foundation for continued discussion. This too may have scared people, although if so, Lovejoy might as well have been scared of himself, for he is as critical of his own writings as he is of others'. I know only too well how annoying it can be to be always in danger of being instructed; but, on the other hand, I also know how enlightening it has been in my own career. For it has shown me that one can be careless in thought without knowing it and that if two people are to talk together they had better know as precisely as possible just what they are talking about. Of course it is also true that much conversation would wither away if the participants did know what they were talking about. Whether that would be a loss or a gain to civilization I leave to others to decide.

If I may put down my brushes for a moment, I would like to raise the question of why in the world a man of the greatest intellectual power should frighten anyone. Is it the sense of possible humiliation which we fear, the humiliation of being shown up as sloppy thinkers, or is it rather the fear which we all probably have of seeing the image which we have formed of ourselves shattered? I imagine that most of us when young construct some sort of "ego-ideal" which, at least in university circles, includes the trait of omniscience. Otherwise it would be hard to explain why the sophomore is always so eager to inform his elders of The Truth. Or am I myself, in my efforts to appear bolder, pretending to be more courageous than I really am, exaggerating the importance of other people's confessions of fear in order to display my own humility? Or have I had the good luck simply to have made Lovejoy's acquaintance after two years or so as a lieutenant of infantry, during which I learned the value of meeting all sorts of people head on, without yawning at their dullness or blinking at their brilliance?

Whatever the facts may be, let me say that Lovejoy's Socratic interrogations arise from his deep-seated love of the truth and his outspoken intolerance of anything less than the truth. And I am willing to grant that there are occasions on which one is not so much interested in the truth as in entertainment. Now one of Lovejoy's philosophic principles has always been that philosophy as an intellectual exercise is the formulation of hypotheses and the drawing of inferences from them. I think that he is one of the very few people who are honest in saying that they read detective stories as they would do puzzles. He wants to see what the clues, the evidence, the deductions are, and he cares nothing for the character of the people involved, the vividness of the

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scenic descriptions, the psychological insight of the dialogue. I imagine, but of course do not know, that he would prefer the clues to be stated as so many straightforward statements of fact, the inferences to be drawn from them as theorems are drawn in geometry from the definitions, axioms and postulates, and that it would be better in his eyes that all the *mise en scène* of the novelist be omitted. I say this with a certain hesitation, since I have never discussed with him his favorite form of reading. It is a kind of literature which with very few exceptions I dislike, and I fear that I like those exceptions for the very reasons which would make Lovejoy dislike them.

Along with his interest in detective stories goes his interest in baseball and the tactics of the Civil War. I am confident that he could reel off the scores and lineup of every baseball game which has been played in the big leagues ever since the first game was played at Cooperstown, if that is where it was played. (This is a sentence that he will read with contempt.) Similarly he can relate the military campaigns of the Civil War from the firing on Fort Sumter to Appomattox, shot by shot. In such contests there is obviously a dialectical element, in the sense that if two well-balanced teams or individuals are pitted against each other, the outcome is unpredictable and is determined by brain power. That is also true, I suppose, if a detective is pitted against a clever criminal. In philosophical discussions one can seldom, if ever, prove one's point by empirical fact. And frequently the dialectical situation can be uncovered within the mind of a single thinker. A philosopher, and this is true of some of the most famous, can be found to hold two antithetical ideas so closely intertwined that they seem as one. This amalgam of affirmative and negative concepts is very much like an athletic or military contest with the great difference that the philosopher is unaware of his inner divisions. It has been one of Lovejoy's contributions to philosophy and to its history to dissociate these conflicting ideas. In his studies in the history of primitivism, for instance, he first distinguished between chronological and cultural primitivism, the first being a belief that the earliest stages of human history were the best, the second that life stripped of the contributions of the arts and sciences is the happiest life. It is clear that the two ideas are not logically connected, although they frequently are fused. Lovejoy then proceeded to distinguish between two kinds of primitive life, the hard and the soft. The former was that praised by men who admired abstinence, ruggedness, simplicity; the latter, that of men who yearned for the Land of Cockaigne, flowing in milk and honey, when Earth bore her fruit spontaneously and man had only to stoop or reach up and pick it. One finds hard primitivists amongst those who looked back to man's earliest appearance on this globe and amongst those who cared nothing about the date of our happiest time and wanted to reform the luxury-loving mass of their fellows. But even these four types of primitivism do not exhaust the possibilities, for most primitivists have some particular ideal which they wish to find exemplified in primitive life, a state of nature in which all men share all their belongings, a state of nature in which all men are vegetarians, a state of nature in which there is no war. And so it goes.

In similar fashion Lovejoy has shown how in a single writer God will be presented as a geometer in certain passages and as a Nietzschean super-superman in others. Hopping from a proposition to its contradictory, he has pointed out over and over again, is one of the logical weaknesses of even the most influential thinkers; but if he has ever seen the pathos of this, I do not recall the essay in which he has said so. To him it is the business of the philosopher to be consistent, and he has had no sympathy with those who believe truth to be of various kinds attained by various forms of insight. It may be true that what the late W. P. Montague called visions are the starting point of all philosophical systems, visions in the sense of some intuitively grasped figure of speech which is translated into formal sentences from which certain

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conclusions are drawn. The lyrical portions of philosophy are distasteful to him: such exercises belong to poetry. To his way of thinking, reason is the one corrective of such frailty, and he refuses to have any truck with weaknesses of any kind. That is why he has been bitterly opposed to any one of the Thirteen Pragmatisms—the enumeration is his—or with Bergsonism or any of the other forms of anti-intellectualism. We may not be able to construct a perfectly consistent system of philosophy which will include every kind of problem from the most general to the most particular, but that, he seems to believe, should be our target.

In spite of this he has been, as everyone knows, a leader in the field of intellectual history. His *The Great Chain of Being* has become both a classic in the history of ideas and a model which the rest of us have tried —often vainly—to copy. Beginning with a simple sentence from Plato's *Timaeus* to the effect that God not being jealous wanted every possible kind of being to be realized, an idea which Lovejoy called the *Principle of Plenitude,* it became temporalized into forms of the theory of evolution and turned up in a multitude of variations in almost every field of art and science. This along with his other studies of a similar type has shown how an idea passes over from one context into another; how something which begins, let us say, as an aesthetic preference may turn into a methodological rule; how a theological axiom may become a scientific axiom; and how a scientific law may become invested with religious significance. When he is doing history he drops his philosophical preferences and treats ideas with a marked respect whether they are foolish or wise. Since his erudition is unusually wide, he has the ability to find data in a large range, and these data turn out to be specially illuminating of his central thesis.

Since he breaks every problem down into its essential parts and then tackles them separately, and since ideas have this strange habit of exfoliating and taking on a great variety of forms, it would be best if a co-operative team could be formed to study a sheaf of problems which are psychologically, if not logically, united. He has preached such co-operation now for many years but has conspicuously failed to find collaborators. The *Documentary History of Primitivism* was to have been a four-volume work written by a group of scholars headed by four general editors. Only one volume appeared, that written by Lovejoy himself and the author of this article. It remains as a promise of what might have been accomplished by intellectual co-operation. I do not know and shall not attempt to guess why scholars, at least in philosophy, are reluctant to work together. There is, of course, the obvious desire of every philosopher to have his own philosophy, to use his own methods, to make his own analyses. But there is also the equally obvious hesitation from which we all suffer to do hard work. If you are going to collaborate with Lovejoy, you must be prepared to push along toward perfection until every possible source of information has been explored, every possible error has been anticipated and eliminated, and furthermore to submit your conclusions to one of the sharpest critics who has ever existed. I am not sure that many scholars are willing to undergo this sort of exercise, nor do I claim any special merit for having done so. For our friendship began when I was young and only too happy to be instructed by someone whose mind I could respect. Had I been his coeval with a scholarly record approaching his, I might have withdrawn from the enterprise. But as I had learned something of infantry tactics from older and more experienced officers, and thus explored realms which were quite unknown to me previously, I was again prepared, I think, to learn in a similar manner about another unknown subject. It is also true that just as I had always been an undiscriminating reader, I was the very man to dig out obscure but interesting passages from men whom history has relegated to the dustbin.

Lovejoy is not able to jump to conclusions. At such acrobatics he is worthless. He sums up a situation, breaks its problems down into their constituent parts, makes an intellectual trial of the solutions to each of

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them, and then draws a tentative conclusion. This is hardly a weakness in a scholar. But one's fellow scholars are only too quick to believe that one who spends his time in careful analyses and criticism is of a secondary order in the hierarchy of minds. I know nothing about ranking human occupations and admit it to be an undertaking which leaves me cold. Suppose that Aristotle is the greatest of all philosophers, which I doubt. To know what he took for granted, to be able to perceive the inconsistencies and wobblings in his writings, the use which he made of his predecessors, the way in which he drew his inferences, his basic metaphors, surely all this is more than nagging at the great. Intellectual criticism in philosophy is both understanding the person and the ideas criticized, and it is also a step toward self-understanding. The adversaries of Lovejoy have thought of his critical activities as a substitute for the kind of constructive thinking of which they consider him incapable. I doubt myself that he would be incapable of anything to which he set his mind. There is also the possibility that his critical exercises are the fruit of his fundamental modesty and humility.

It is no secret among his acquaintances that if there is one thing which he hates more than any other, it is centering a man's philosophy around his biography. Philosophy, like science, is not determined by psychological causes but by evidence and logical consistency. Too much fuss, he feels, has been made over people as individuals. The person should be submerged in his work. He has either failed to see or has refused to admit the contribution of temperament to a sound philosophy, although he has recognized very clearly its contribution to an unsound one. He has invented the famous term *Metaphysical Pathos* to name it. Metaphysical pathos is the emotional aura that surrounds certain abstract words, such as the eternal, the unified, the dynamic, the creative, the organic, and that gives what they name great value. Thus to prove that something is unified rather than multiple, or eternal rather than temporal, seems also to prove that the thing is good. Whether anyone can evade the influence of metaphysical pathos might be denied. But it is precisely this which Lovejoy has asserted. Although he is too realistic to deny its predominant influence, he still thinks it possible to escape from its power. You have only to translate your emotions into rational sentences, to say aloud to yourself, as it were, "The dynamic is better than the static," or, "The everlasting is better than the ephemeral," and then you will be able to examine your proposition and see whether or not it is always true. In this, I think, he shows the effect of his study of eighteenth-century rationalists, for those men on the whole maintained that thinking could be and should be guided exclusively by logic. But if a philosopher is found to have been swayed by the emotional force of certain abstractions, it might be legitimate to look for those incidents in his private life that have weakened his resistance to it. Some historians, both amateur and professional psychoanalysts, have tried to discover what oriented a man like Nietzsche, to take but one example, toward the theory of the master-will, the will to power, and they have come up with indicating his personal weakness for which he was trying to compensate. A purely literary source for this, such as the writings of Gobineau, would not do. One would have to find something within his more intimate life, something of which he could not have been aware. This tendency on the part of historians Lovejoy would condemn as mind-reading. No one can make a reasonable psychoanalysis of a dead man, when it admittedly takes months of patient interviewing and free association to do the same for a living man. What hope then is there for anything better than conjecture?

Another such attempt has been that of the sociological school, by which I mean those scholars who see all forms of abstract thinking as a symbolic reflection of the socioeconomic structure. Thus pre-Socratic philosophers who lived in a society which was passing from aristocratic control to democratic control were attracted to stability and unity, for they sided with the aristocrats, whereas men like Voltaire and

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Condorcet were more attracted to change and multiplicity, for they sided with the *bourgeoisie* against the nobility. But here too we are merely pushed back a step since we do not know why people take the sides they take. Condorcet, for instance, may have sided with the forces of revolution, but its leaders chopped off his head. No economic structure has the approval of all the members of any society at any one time. For instance, whereas the Idéologues on the whole approved of the French Revolution, Joseph de Maistre and the Vicomte de Bonald thoroughly disapproved of it. One cannot conclude that this was because both were nobles, for many nobles were revolutionists, including that royal prince, the Duc d'Orléans. Moreover, if we grant that there is something inherent in a man which in part determines what he will believe and what he will reject, then we are back where we were before and must make guesses which will be more or less sound, and we shall have no way of telling which they are. Lovejoy consequently has preferred to stop at the texts and write the history of what men said from what they wrote and of what they thought from what they said. Until we know more of the workings of the human mind, this is perhaps all that can be done. At any rate this is what Lovejoy has done, and he has been satisfied with doing it.

It is natural that a man who believes in the substantial reality of ideas should make little attempt to derive their existence from something not ideas, unconscious strivings, social structures, economic interests, or the like. And in his epistemology he has remained a dualist. His most eloquent and most effective protest against all theories which try to explain away the real existence of our ideas is to be found in his Carus Lectures, *The Revolt against Dualism*. It should be recalled that at the time this book was written it was fashionable to deny that ideas were anything more than physiological states, sensory nerve currents, selections of something called sense-data, "neutral entities," perspectives, which were somehow or other immediately aroused under predictable conditions. Thus colors and sounds, and presumably all other sensory qualities, were just as external to the mind as atoms and molecules and just as material in some sense of the word. The fear of any kind of dualism was apparently very great and the most ingenious devices were invented to prove that our minds were in reality not different from our bodies. By first stating his definition of a physical object, Lovejoy was able to show that the things which we directly see cannot be numerically one with them. To give but one example of the kind of demonstration which he used, the date at which a ray of light leaves a star cannot be the same as the date at which it impinges on our optic nerves, and in some cases we know that the star in question has been extinguished many years before we have the visual impression corresponding to it. The paradoxes which occur to one who tries to identify the sensory object with the physical object are notorious, and although Lovejoy has been willing to admit the difficulties of dualism, as a rational man he has believed that he must accept them and move on from there.

In general most Western philosophers have either neglected the problem of time or have denied its existence. They have been looking for structures not processes, and their metaphysical systems give one the cosmic anatomy rather than its physiology. But Lovejoy took the point of view—and he took it early in his career—that time was certainly one thing which could not be denied. Yet instead of developing a metaphysics like that of Bergson or of Whitehead out of this central idea, he has used it to distinguish between the date of a sensation's origin and the date of its appearance in consciousness. I think I am not doing him an injustice when I say that he has always thought in terms of things (*res*) not events. He has therefore refused to use the concept of space-time and the dependent concept of the point-instant. He has even dared to join in battle with the physicists and to argue about the validity of such startling notions as "the time-retarding journey." According to this notion if one were to travel with a speed approaching that of light, one would age less rapidly

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than if one were traveling more slowly. There seemed to be in this argument a fusion between our ways of measuring motion and the absolute speed of motion. The physicists insist that there is no sense in talking about motion except in terms of measurement; the philosopher, that measurements and that which they measure are two quite different things. The physicists insist that if the speed of light is the highest velocity which could be measured, it is the highest velocity which could exist. The philosopher retorts, in effect, although not in these words, that the limitations of the conditions of knowledge are not the limitations of existence. This leaves the way open for a method of measuring velocity which does not depend on light-signals. But of course if velocity is defined in terms of light, the way leads to nothing.

I trust that I am not building up the image of a man who spends his life on dialectical problems. For this would be false to my model. He does intellectualize his interests, but his interests are not merely cogitation. His knowledge of English poetry, for instance, is extraordinary. I recall how on his eightieth birthday at a dinner given in his honor he recited by heart line after line of Pope's *Essay on Man* to show us what could be done with it by a historian of ideas. But his knowledge of the ancient classics is almost as great, and although I have never heard him recite choruses from Aeschylus, I am confident that if the occasion should arise, let us say on his ninetieth birthday, he could at least recite large sections of the *Aeneid*. I also remember his talking with me about Garnier's opera house in Paris, talking about its plan and construction without using slides or photographs, as if he were standing before it. But he could also describe Bull Run or Gettysburg in the same way and with the same clarity. There is only one trait of his which exceeds in vigor his literary memory, and that is his moral courage. There has never been an injustice which he was not prepared to rectify, never a cowardly act which he was not prepared to protest. And, be it understood once and for all, his rectifications and protests are something to avoid. Only a person with strong views on right and wrong could be so strong a champion of the right, and I find it hard to believe that anyone should think Lovejoy ignorant of ethical distinctions. But at the same time his extensive knowledge of the literatures of many languages has given him a sense of the varieties of ethical experience so that his moral judgments are never narrow. I imagine that he would head the list of vices with lying, both major and minor, followed closely with stupidity. For he understands the need of basing reason on knowledge and of correcting moral judgments with sympathy. It is here that action has met reason and reason been tested by action and in their meeting have produced the philosopher who is the true lover of wisdom.

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reappraisals

The Relevance of Thorstein Veblen

DAVID RIESMAN and STAUGHTON LYND

The interpretation of Veblen offered in these pages emphasizes above all the ambiguity, even the internal contradictions, of his thought. Inconsistency, as Emerson said, need not be altogether a defect: it may reflect a complex and honest mind working on inherently difficult problems. Yet we remain more critical of Veblen than do a good many of those who have written centennial interpretations of his work and influence; this is in some measure because we attempt to view his writings as a whole, where contradictions are most in evidence, rather than taking them book by book or theme by theme. Moreover, we attempt to link the man and the work, not to diminish or explain away the latter, but to try to make sense of its incompatibilities. Thus, for example, it remains a problem for us why Veblen invoked over and over again the virtues of small-scale neighborly life among peasants and savages, while at the same time praising the industrial technology which worked in his view toward ever-increasing centralization. So, too, we must ask what he intended in attacking the psychology of classical economics for assuming men to be passive, while at the same time he mocked at reformers as tinkering busybodies. And, since war and preparation for war preoccupy us as these pages are being written, we also want to ask what kind of radical was the Veblen who, although strongly against war, supported American entry into the First World War, when La Follette, Debs and Randolph Bourne, along with many other brave and farsighted men, opposed it?

Veblen was a reserved and idiosyncratic person, who expressed, in a language all his own, attitudes toward American society which were then novel and are today still unconventional (it follows that, as one's judgments of America shift, so will one's reaction to Veblen himself). His wordplay, his thought and his personality were for him means of concealment as well as of expression, and each can become a barrier to the reader seeking rapport with the writer. Henry Adams, unlike Veblen in so many ways, was like him in the obsessive impersonality with which he referred to himself, as in the famous third-person manner of his *Autobiography*. Both men, seemingly, felt inwardly crushed and suffocated by the

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Gilded Age of late nineteenth-century America: a world, as Adams wrote, in which a sensitive man could not bear to live without a shudder. And this led both men to hesitate in expressing their feelings. Yet these feelings leaked in, and were among the many influences pressing toward a climate in which educated people today feel free—sometimes virtually compelled!—to open themselves up, to express themselves, to be sincere and direct. Many people who have grown up in this more permissive milieu find it hard to be sympathetic with Veblen's indirection and irony; although they might bear easily with myth and symbolism in poetry and tale, they are impatient with an economist who doesn't come right out with what he thinks.

More assertive men than Veblen reacted to him in his own time with a similar impatience. Thus, H. L. Mencken said that Veblen's language often merely clothed the obvious in sonorous prolixity. He was right up to a point: Veblen was at times trapped within his self-defensive apparatus, and he repeated himself interminably, burying an unforgettable phrase—and the trenchant idea behind it—in wordy exegesis. Viewed, however, with less impatience and with sympathy for a man who could not believe that anybody was listening, Veblen's style strikes us, after many readings, as brilliant and inventive—a genuine contribution to American polemical and scholarly prose.

But it is a mixture of strangeness and simplicity in Veblen's intellectual framework that probably inhibits and confuses his would-be readers even more than do the complexities of his personality or the style he used as a mask. Because key Veblenian terms like "instinct," "institution" and "barbarian" are in common use, we are overready to assume we understand the special sense in which Veblen used them. In fact, it would almost be better to consider his terminology as one does Plato's *hubris* and *nemesis*, or Machiavelli's *virtù* and *fortuna*: words which because of their strangeness are rightly suspected to clothe unfamiliar meanings. Veblen, for all his claim to derive only common-sense conclusions from merely everyday words, in fact relied on an anthropology, an economics, a psychology, and a philosophy which are superseded or out-of-fashion today. Posing as the king's jester or the village idiot, he was actually encyclopedic in his learning, and original, not as a researcher in the modern sense, but as an "armchair theorist" who made an extraordinary synthesis from derived materials.

What were these materials? In economics, Veblen followed the German "historical school" of Schmoller and Sombart, which emphasized the development of economic systems and institutions, rather than the mathematical interplay of economic interests within a capitalist system assumed to be eternal. In philosophy, Veblen was a disciple of Kant, taking from him especially the notion that men look out on their experience with preconceived interpretative categories. Owing to his admiration for Darwin and his insistence on evolutionary method in every field of knowledge, Veblen distrusted Hegel's developmental logic as non-empirical and goal-directed ("teleological"). In fact, in his distrust of any romantic, Hegelian-influenced view of man and history, any utopian image based on a not merely biological understanding of man's essential nature, Veblen was very much in the Anglo-American tradition of hardheaded empiricism, more narrowly pragmatic than John Dewey or William James.

Yet at the same time his psychology was largely shaped by these two men, one of whom (Dewey) was a contemporary of his at the University of Chicago. James and Dewey insisted that human nature was active, unfolding and whole. Veblen, from this same point of view, never tired of accusing his fellow economists of retaining a conception of the human mind as merely passive and receptive, propelled by discrete external events, at a time when psychology had left this view behind. However, Veblen relied also on the concept of "instinct," which hardly seems holistic or purposive to us; nor did he link it with "impulse," as Dewey was later to do in *Human Nature*

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and Conduct: there were elements of reductionism in Veblen's thought, partly as a way of reminding himself that he was "scientific" and not nonsensically metaphysical, partly perhaps also reflecting his deep personal passivity and despair. (Freud, who handled the biological concepts of the instincts more inventively, also selected among current concepts of science those compatible with his more active pessimism.)

Anthropology was the one major field on which Veblen drew without at the same time feeling called on to reform it. It was a new discipline and, as he saw it, wholly and beneficially under the influence of Darwinian method. This anthropology which he knew and trusted conceived that all mankind had evolved through a definite sequence of social systems; and that the primitive mind, characterized by an "animism" which considered all things to be living and goal-directed, likewise evolved by regular stages toward science and secularism. Veblen's own schema of social evolution involved two essential stages. The first, "savagery," was for him peaceful, co-operative and good. The second, "barbarism," was competitive, warlike and spiritually oriented to personal rather than communal achievement, hence (as Veblen saw it) to a falsely teleological rendering of external reality. All this Veblen elaborated in great detail, and correlated with definite stages in the development of technology, in his conception the dynamic, causal factor. The daring and satirical twist which Veblen gave to the then-common anthropological assumptions lay in his bland assertion that modern society was, in its essential tone, only a latter-day barbarism.

In this distinction between a peaceful, industrious, co-operative "savagery," and an aggressive, parasitical, competitive "barbarism," Veblen knitted together the intellectual strands which he inherited. The contrast between "savagery" and "barbarism" was for him a contrast of cultural atmospheres, of ways of getting a living, of personality types, of outlooks on the world. And this perception of bellicosity and peaceableness as fundamental themes of history and social psychology should not be confused with the conceptual machinery Veblen employed to express it. It is not particularly important whether a peaceful, harmonious society really existed at the dawn of history, or is only a hope cast in the form of a fictive past, like the "state of nature" of Locke and Rousseau. What matters is that Veblen's sense of the central problems of American society, when stripped down to this quintessential contrast of two ways of life, has enduring truth. To view modern civilization as still barbaric at its core seems less funny today than to those who laughed in 1899 (at the end of the "splendid little war" with Spain) at *The Theory of the Leisure Class.*

Veblen's black-and-white juxtaposition of "savagery" and "barbarism" was in good part derived from the Populist atmosphere of the Middle West in the post-Civil War decades (Veblen was twenty in 1877). The historian Richard Hofstadter has brilliantly characterized the "folklore of Populism": the mélange of inarticulate major premises which held together the strongest popular movement in American history. Populists believed in a golden age of peace and happiness in the past; the natural harmony of society if uncorrupted by power and money; a "dualistic version of social struggles"; and a "conspiracy theory of history."[1] One does not have to read many pages of Veblen to find each of these themes not merely present, but central to his thought.

The "captains of industry" Veblen satirized—the stock manipulators, bankers and other assorted robber barons who had come to pelf and power after the Civil War—were creating widespread apprehension, not only among the impoverished wheat and cotton farmers who flocked to the Populist party, but also among the business and professional men of the "old" middle classes who led the Progressive movement. To compare the barons, as Veblen did, with the feudal lords of the Middle Ages, or to attack "Wall Street" as a con-

[1] *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York, 1956), p. 62.

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spiracy, as the Populists did, may strike us today as wild exaggeration; to understand these responses, we must put ourselves back into a period when speculators "under cover of night and cloud" (in Veblen's repeated phrase) made and unmade prosperity, and when industrialists could sneer "The public be damned!" and "Ain't I got the power?" By their tastes as well as their tactics, moreover, the *nouveaux riches* invited comparison with feudalism. They built castles; laid out towns for their own sort (like Tuxedo Park near New York City, which imported a village of Slavic workmen to make its roads, and one of Italians to tend its lawns); bought paintings and founded the D.A.R.; discovered family coats-of-arms and read Sir Walter Scott. Others beside Veblen spoke of a "new feudalism"; and the first illustrator of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* put the faces of contemporary businessmen and politicians on Mark Twain's armored knights; so, too, in *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain paid his respects to the Gilded Age (his own phrase) by naming his small-time shysters "Duke" and "King." Exploring opposite extremes of language—the one colloquial, the other a parody of academese—Twain and Veblen restated the Jeffersonian antithesis of the yeoman's simple and co-operative style of life versus the aristocratic pretensions and corrupt and warlike values of the well-to-do.

Populism no doubt oversimplified Jefferson's own outlook—one so complex that one can find in his letters precedent for a wide variety of positions. Moreover, Richard Hofstadter, Oscar Handlin and other historians have recently emphasized that, while Populism raised for the first time as public issues the great themes of modern American reform—such as the graduated income tax, government regulation of monopolies, direct election of senators, government subsidization of farm surpluses—it also fostered darker currents of popular social attitudes: racism and isolationism, and a quasi-paranoid and demagogic cast of thought. Much recent writing has tended to emphasize these darker currents, as contrasted to the more hopeful ones, not only in American Populism, but also in many popular revolutionary movements; modern totalitarianism has made many non-Communist intellectuals uneasy about any forms of political militancy, with its inevitable exaggerations, its dangers for intellectual and artistic cultivation, its potential threat to an orderly, sober and constitutional democracy. But we can see (especially clearly, perhaps, after eight years of the Eisenhower regime) that political moderation is not a lasting or creative quiescence; that an age of reform looks better than an age of stagnation; that the end of ideology could betoken the end of ideas. While there are undoubted linkages of content and form between, let us say, the elder La Follette and the late Senator McCarthy, there are also enormous differences of tone, buoyancy and context. The gentle, yet shrewd, humanity of Senator George Norris is somehow missing from our contemporary picture of the demagogic and mean-spirited side of Populism.[2] All this has been well stated by C. Vann Woodward, who argues that while

[2] It may be objected that La Follette and Norris were "Progressives," not "Populists." This distinction has been made by Oscar Handlin and other historians, and there is certainly a difference of tone between the middle-class, controlled kind of reform (which Woodrow Wilson himself typified) and the Populist mass movement, the "rising sea of discontent," as so many genteel writers of the time called it. Yet the elements of continuity between Populism and Progressivism are extremely strong. In his autobiography, La Follette wrote of the Granger Movement swirling around him when he was a boy. The states which pioneered in the Progressive reforms of women's suffrage or initiative, referendum and recall, which gave heavy votes to La Follette in 1924 and sent Norris, Borah, Wheeler, and like-minded men to the Senate, were almost without exception west of the Mississippi. Populists and Progressives were alike, moreover, in their resentment not only against the robber barons at the top of society, who were forcing society away from a Jeffersonian and Jacksonian ideal, but also against the new "inferior" immigrants who were coming in at the bottom and who, in their way, seemed to be subverting white, Anglo-Saxon values. Thus, if a Populist like Tom Watson turned in the end to racism, Progressives in the era of Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson turned to a "white man's burden" imperialism.

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the Populists were occasionally anti-Semitic, this was seldom a salient theme, and quite negligible in comparison with frequent courageous advocacy in the South of solidarity between Whites and Negroes.[3]

Veblen's future impact on our thought will probably depend less on his specialized contributions than on the outcome of this debate about Populism and about political radicalism generally. For it is a measure of Veblen's strength as a social critic that no rounded judgment of his work can be made that is not also a judgment of American society, now as well as then. If, as the antagonists of Populism assert, the evils perceived by the Populists were more imaginary than real, and in any case irrelevant today, and if the fear to be naïve becomes a stronger political motive than indignation at cruelty and injustice, then the inclination will be to stress the psychological sources of both Populism and Veblenism at the expense of (rather than in clarification of) their substantive content. A quite different approach will follow if one agrees, as we are inclined to do now, with William Dean Howells' summary of the Populist impulse (in his introduction to Hamlin Garland's *Main-Travelled Roads*): "They feel that something is wrong, and they know the wrong is not theirs." Undoubtedly, the Populists, including Veblen, oversimplified the wrong, and regarded the wrongdoers with a Philistine and at times vindictive hatred. But in reading Veblen we must never forget that he lived and wrote at a time when Americans, both on the land and in the cities, could and did starve to death; when homeless men wandered the roads without hope of public succor; and when the newly rich and complacent lived a far more Philistine life than their humanitarian critics, condemning those who failed not only to terrible poverty but to guilt for not having "made it" when, according to doctrine, anyone could.

In contrast to his alienated, Populist tone stands Veblen's attitude toward the First World War. When he left academic life to join Wilson's war government it marked a startling departure from his customary ironic skepticism toward efforts at reform. His book *The Nature of Peace* wavers between an unusually exposed plea for intelligent peacemaking, and the more familiar claim to be attempting nothing more than "a systematic knowledge of things as they are."[4] In no other work does Veblen stray so often and so far from the naturalism he shared with novelists like Stephen Crane and Frank Norris: what Parrington calls "a pessimistic realism that sets man in a mechanical world."[5] Here is an inconsistency which calls not so much for analysis or satire, as for pondering by all those who seek to combine social analysis with personal action for social change.

The dichotomy between peaceful "savagery" and predatory "barbarism" appears in Veblen's war writing as a contrast between the Allied and the Central powers. Like Woodrow Wilson, Veblen's attitude toward peace and war embraced two powerful sentiments. One was a horror of war as such, a tendency to believe that no provocation could be sufficient excuse to unleash the holocaust. Wilson expressed this view most notably in his "peace without victory" speech of January, 1917, delivered just at the time Veblen was composing *The Nature of Peace*. In that book, however, Veblen was already straining forward to the new attitude adopted by Wilson in his war message of April: the conviction that autocratic governments could not be trusted to make a lasting negotiated peace, hence that war must be pressed on to victory "to make the world safe for democracy."

In hindsight, or even in the perspective of the many radicals who at the time re-

[3] See "The Populist Heritage and the Intellectual," THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, XXIX (Winter, 1959-1960), pp. 55-72. Woodward adds that when the Populist program failed, many Populist leaders themselves turned sour and rancorous, only then using racism as a form of attack on the status quo.

[4] *An Inquiry into the Nature of Peace and the Terms of its Perpetuation* (New York, 1919), vii.

[5] *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (New York, 1930), xii.

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fused to go along with Wilson, Veblen's identification of the Allies and the United States with democracy seems curious—as no doubt the phrase "free world," used indiscriminately to refer to the anti-Communist coalition of our day, will seem a generation hence, provided that the very antithesis allows a new generation to grow up. Before the war, Veblen plainly regarded American capitalists as latter-day barbarians; how is it that he suddenly sees the Germans as the real barbarians? How is it that the skeptical student of propaganda, who was later to dub advertising "creative psychiatry," fell so unguardedly for the anti-German war propaganda of the Allies and the Yankee Easterners whom Veblen had previously mistrusted?

Do we deal here with the frequent phenomenon that the more suspicious a person is, the more gullible he can become? Suppressing and hence keeping unclarified his own radicalism, Veblen imagined that he could transpose into the conflict between the Allies and the Entente powers his dichotomy between peaceful habits and institutions ("savagery") and warlike and predatory ones ("barbarism"). And, concluding in terms now quite familiar to us (as we fight the Cold War with Maginot-Line slogans about Munich and appeasement) that Germany's dynastic state was not only evil and oppressive in itself, but inherently expansionist and impossible to treat with, Veblen came to justify war itself, chafing as angrily as Theodore Roosevelt at Wilson's effort to mediate rather than fight.

When Wilson did declare war, Veblen came for the duration to persuade himself that Wilson might go so far as basically to modify American capitalism in the interest of winning the war and making a lasting peace. Veblen did not realize that Wilson's anti-German moralism was not so sharp as his own, nor could he be aware of how tormented Wilson felt the very night before he asked Congress to declare war. So, too, Veblen's hopes for Wilson as a revolutionary blinded him to evidence to the contrary, such as Wilson's antagonistic attitude toward labor, toward Debs, and toward Mexican uprisings against American investments and dollar diplomacy there. (Such self-deception was to find devotees among Franklin Roosevelt's admirers in the Second World War and, *pari passu*, in the Cold War.)

Ironically, we know today that Wilson's pronouncement of the famous Fourteen Points in January, 1918, was in good part brought on by the Russian Bolsheviks, who published the secret Allied treaties and sent forth to the world the slogan of "no annexation and no indemnities."[6] Yet the Bolshevik slogans were themselves borrowed from the speeches of Wilson; and in this complicated interplay of appearance and reality, the sources of Veblen's later hatred of Wilson and angry pro-Bolshevism are to be found.

Thus, in the Veblen of 1914-1917, we meet a man whose mind was not the "hard clear prism" Dos Passos spoke of, whose stance was not the unwavering hostility to the status quo in all its aspects which is so often attributed to him. Rather this is a Veblen whose judgment was quickly questioned by scholarship, as in other cases it was rendered obsolete by events.[7]

None of this, however, is said in a spirit of debunking Veblen. Few are the saints who utterly escape the temptation to join "their" nation in a moral crusade against an obvious international wrongdoer! And, to the extent that we have succeeded in overcoming the contamination of nationalism within ourselves, so that we can look with appropriate horror at the policy of deterrence and see through the fanatical rationalizations with which moral men justify it, we are in debt to that more fully human side of Veblen that saw war as the

[6] Cf. the authoritative and enlightening discussion by George F. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War* (Princeton, 1956), Chapters VII, XII.

[7] Thus ten years after America's entrance into the war, Sidney B. Fay was writing in *The Origins of the World War* (New York, 1927), II, 522: "Germany did not plot a European War, did not want one, and made genuine, though too belated, efforts to avert one."

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health of the dynastic (or, as we would say, garrison) state, and saw peace as the health of mankind. Beyond that, Veblen had a sense of the ways in which technology could be married to nationalism for war-making purposes, and of the contribution of the "underlying population" to a war-like animus, so that while he is far from a complete guide to the present world conflict, he is a good preliminary one. Like other Midwesterners of a later generation —we think of Wendell Willkie, George Kennan, Harold Stassen, Glenway Wescott, among many very unlike men—he found his way to an intellectually cosmopolitan outlook.

In view of all this, it is remarkable that Veblen has found no place in the mainstream of socialist thought, in America or abroad. The key themes of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* were first presented by Veblen in the context of socialist theory, as an attempt to deal with the failure of Marx's prediction of increasing material misery among the industrial proletariat. In one of his earliest essays, "Some Neglected Points in the Theory of Socialism" (1891), Veblen forcefully advanced the thesis of relative deprivation and in this connection introduced the conception (although not yet the term) of conspicuous consumption:

> The existing system does not make, and does not tend to make, the industrious poor poorer, as measured absolutely in terms of livelihood; but it does tend to make them relatively poorer, in their own eyes, as measured in terms of comparative economic importance, and, curious as it may seem at first sight, this is what seems to count.

Veblen saw that the increase of well-being among industrial workers has led to their bourgeoisification through their leisure-time activities. He saw that the leisure class in modern Western societies extends almost to the very bottom, including all those who "keep up appearances." Yet, he argues, in this early work, the motive of envy among workingmen may be strong enough to bring on a socialist transformation.

In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, this notion of defeating the devil by his own devices no longer satisfies Veblen. He has begun to develop his most original conception: that the psychological discipline of factory work will train men to think matter-of-factly rather than subjectively, to place emulation and aggression second to the impersonal needs of the communal technology. In this hope were fused many other Veblenian motifs, and in particular his contention that work was not (as the "received economics" postulated) naturally distasteful to man.

The opaque discipline of modern machine-tending, Veblen argues, can act as a solvent on institutions grounded in animistic and self-centered thinking. The impact of the machine Veblen conceived to be largely negative: its effect on the workingman's thought would be toward nihilism. In *The Theory of Business Enterprise* he wrote:

> There is little indication of a constructive movement toward any specific arrangement to take the place of the institution whose existence is threatened. There is a loosening of the bonds, a weakening of conviction as to the full truth and beauty of the received domestic institutions, without much of a consensus as to what is to be done about it, if anything. In this, as at other junctures of a similar kind, the mechanically employed classes, trained to matter-of-fact habits of thought, show a notable lack of spontaneity in the construction of new myths or conventions, as well as in the reconstruction of the old.

But Veblen—and this brings us to the center of his thought—was not dismayed, as for example Tocqueville or Durkheim were dismayed, by the attrition of the going cultural consensus, because he had faith in the acultural or biological man who would thereby be set free.

In the introduction to *The Theory of the Leisure Class* and in the chapter on "The Conservation of Archaic Traits," Veblen gives us his revised picture of man in the state of nature. This was the peaceful, primitive Ur-society which he thought he found in such contemporary groups as the Eskimo and the Pueblo Indians, in pre-

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Christian Scandinavia as portrayed in the Icelandic sagas, and indeed throughout the folklore and archaeological remains of earliest man.

> They are small groups and of a simple (archaic) structure; they are commonly peaceful and sedentary; they are poor; and individual ownership is not a dominant feature of their economic system. . . . Indeed, the most notable trait common to members of such communities is a certain amiable inefficiency when confronted with force or fraud.

Enormously influenced by Darwinism, Veblen saw this putative Golden Age as the social environment in which the generic traits of human nature had been biologically selected and fixed. Thus he thought he had a scientific basis for hope: that the mélange of predatory institutions brought in by nomadic barbarians, and in the saddle since, were but a cultural crust which could be scraped away, leaving man as he was biologically meant to be, a creature on the whole willing to live and let live.

This core conception of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* has serious flaws. Veblen was aware of some of them. He knew that the archaic communal life to which, in his view, man was by nature suited, was small-scale and local, while the modern industrial discipline is far-flung and expansive. In a note to *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution*, he observed that the "small-scale, half anarchistic, neighborhood plan of society would be enforceable only within such territorial bounds as would be covered by the habitual range of neighborly contact," but,

> In the course of time, though it appears to have occupied several thousand years of slow but scarcely broken advance, their excessive efficiency in the mechanic arts pushed the North-European peoples out of that state of culture answering to their natural bent. And ever since they so passed the technological limit of tolerance of that archaic scheme of use and wont they have been restlessly casting back for some workable compromise that would permit their ideal of "local self-government" by neighborly common sense to live somehow in the shadow of the large-scale coercive rule that killed it.

In the same book Veblen described how a pre-industrial society like Germany could appropriate the industrial arts and, far from being transformed by them, use them for its pre-existing, that is barbarian, purposes. He did not seem to see that a man conditioned by the cumulative fakery of the leisure-class world, where all was personalized and distorted, might be impervious to the cause-and-effect logic underlying the machine technology, and simply use his factory job as a source of the wherewithal to sustain an emulative life. Nor did he quite appreciate how factory work confines the purposeful bent which can make labor a delight, how, in contrast to all that James and Dewey taught, it permits the emotional engagement of only a fraction of the self.

What is the relevance of Veblen today? His social science was in large part a gloss on then-current agrarian attitudes; and where it broke new ground, as in his concept of the discipline of factory work, it leaves many questions unasked.

What survives is an attitude, not a doctrine. Veblen's legacy is the bleak and pungent quality of his belief that the social atmosphere of modern capitalism is in every way hostile to a peaceful, co-operative life. As an immigrant's son (he could not speak fluent English till well on in college) as well as a radical, Veblen was doubly alienated from his society. His detachment, both from the powers-that-be and the reform movements, made possible a thorough commitment to fundamental things.

These qualities remind one of Thoreau, although Veblen is even more bitter, withdrawn and passive. No one now bothers with Thoreau's theories, such as the notion of "correspondence" between the biological and mental worlds; and in a hundred years, if the interpretation here advanced is correct, few will remember "the instinct of workmanship" or the contrast of "savagery" and "barbarism." Veblen's social psychology will outlive its terminology, his Populist critique its time-bound enemies.

Veblen, like Thoreau, turned back to the enduring qualities of nature and life itself,

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and arraigned American society as their betrayer. The cabins in the woods which both men frequented are a kind of symbol of this attitude. The fondness for nature and the natural, the rejection of all cant and hypocrisy, the "inner emigration," and in Veblen's case the unaggressive unkemptness and relaxed sexual attitudes—all these would seem to link the attitudes of these men to those of our contemporary Beats, or to the J. D. Salinger characters for whom also a cabin in the woods becomes a symbol of incorruptibility. But the differences are as profound. Neither Veblen nor Thoreau sought escape from the political conflicts of their time, but instead took risks for what they believed in. Both men were disciplined workers who never dreamed that messy behavior would provide an alibi for messy work. And while both men shared a post-Enlightenment distrust of the ravages and ridiculousness of which the human, and perhaps especially the academic, intellect is capable, neither man praised mindlessness nor was fundamentally anti-intellectual—surely not the Veblen who remained a life-long scholar and devotee of "idle curiosity." If they rejected aspects of their world, it was with the hope of changing them.

And yet it is at this point that the tragic fate of both men becomes most clear. Being, like so many Americans, clearer about "freedom from" than "freedom to," they tended in their bitterness and isolation to become solitary rebels; both men hurt and spurned the companionship they might have had. Escaping from fierce constraint, they distrusted all given authority, all given institutions: they sought (in Thoreau's words) "hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call reality, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin."[8]

[8] Cf. the similar rejection of institutions by Allen Wheelis, a psychoanalyst influenced by Veblen, in *The Quest for Identity* (1958).

We must indeed begin there—begin by seeing reality clear. But further steps, even toward the grasp of reality, require communal support, and this in turn depends on a human solidarity that neither Veblen nor Thoreau rejected, but that neither could call forth in self or other. Veblen was driven by his epoch to associate solidarity with "savagery," that is, with a prehistoric peaceable tribe. However, quite rejecting folksiness and sentimentality, Veblen also insisted that man must make his peace with the machine; much like C. P. Snow in his lectures on *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, Veblen was sensitive to the snobbery and subtle inhumanity hidden in literary hostility to technology and to the modern world. Admiring both the matter-of-fact skepticism he believed industrial man to possess and the amiable, unassertive humanity he attributed to pre-industrial man, Veblen was unable in his own life or in his work to bridge the two cultures, or to envisage a post-industrial world that might be both abundant and fraternal.

Much as Freud saw the advance of civilization as a trap, in which man's libidinal and aggressive instincts become turned against himself, so Veblen saw the increase of human productivity as the very source of exploitation and waste: he has few suggestions as to how economic abundance, the fruit of the workmanship of the race, can be used to join men in fraternal solidarity rather than to divide them in emulation and war. With a pessimism characteristic of him, but far rarer in his day than in ours, he wrote:

> History records more frequent and more spectacular instances of the triumph of imbecile institutions over life and culture than of peoples who have, by force of instinctive insight, saved themselves alive out of a desperately precarious institutional situation, such, for instance, as now faces the peoples of Christendom.

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The Quarrel With Time in American Fiction

THOMAS F. CURLEY

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It is a premise of this essay that man cannot forget. When he tries to, he demeans himself; if he succeeds, he destroys himself.

I am concerned here with a number of contemporary American novels and with the American novel in general since the end of World War II. In criticizing the novels, however, one must keep in mind that this same period has seen in the criticism of American literature a vigorous and ambitious foray toward the understanding of our books and our country. I have in mind particularly the essays of Allen Tate and Lionel Trilling and the works of Marius Bewley, Richard Chase and Leslie Fiedler.

One of the chief virtues of good historical criticism is that it re-creates the past for the present, recovers, in a phrase of Lionel Trilling's, "the hum and buzz of implication." What can we learn from a study of our earlier novels that will help us to understand and assess our contemporary writers?

We know that the American novel took its cue first from the English and then from the French and Russian novelists—but only its cue. Perhaps the briefest, precise statement of reasons for the American divergence is Mr. Tate's: "The American novel has had to find a new experience, and only in our time has it been able to pause for the difficult task of getting itself written. That is an old story with us, yet beneath it lies a complexity of feeling that from Hawthorne down to our time has baffled our best understanding." Much of our recent criticism has been devoted to the analysis of the conditions that made it necessary for the American novel to seek a new experience. According to Mr. Trilling, we lacked the tension between a middle class and an aristocracy and were therefore bereft of manners, the traditional arena of the novel, in any meaningful sense. We sought a new experience because we hadn't the wherewithal for the old one. I think Trilling has done exceptionally well in accounting for the difference in the American novel. What he does not account for is the complexity of feeling underlying, or resulting from, this search.

Was this lunge toward the new an attempt on the part of the American to forget the past, the European past which, as Lawrence said, the colonists wanted no part of? I said at the beginning that man demeans himself when he tries to forget. Is it not possible that the American novelist, conscious of a need to rebel against Europe and to find a new continent for the spirit, was also

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aware that Europe had made him and that in forgetting Europe, he was forgetting himself. I think that might account for the complexity of feeling, and in this I am only saying in a somewhat different way what Richard Chase maintains in *The American Novel and Its Tradition*: that our novels achieve their being, energy and form from the perception and acceptance not of unities, but of radical disunities.

One side of the feeling is stated explicitly by Whitman in the opening lines of the *Song of the Open Road:*

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Every eighteen-year-old who has ever tried it knows this is untrue. The brown path or the macadam turnpike does not lead wherever you choose. Whitman knew this, too: what he wanted was impossible but he continued to want it. Another side of this feeling (I don't mean to imply there are only two) is brought out by Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* and aptly noticed by Marius Bewley in a chapter of his *The Eccentric Design*, entitled "Fitzgerald and the Collapse of the American Dream." Bewley recognizes that Fitzgerald perfectly understood the inadequacy of Gatsby's romantic view of wealth. "But," he goes on, "that is not the point. He presents it in Gatsby as a romantic baptism of desire for a reality that stubbornly remains out of his sight. It is as if a savage islander suddenly touched with Grace, transcended in his prayers and aspirations the grotesque little fetish in which he imagined he discovered the object of his longing." I think that one of the chief obstacles to competent American fiction is that every intelligent novelist, who wishes to use his talents to the limit, seeks a reality that stubbornly remains out of sight.

Now a good deal has been written about the satisfactions of mere seeking without reference to finding. That's nonsense. If you're unconcerned with the object of your search, you're not seeking at all, you're just circulating. There are pleasures in that, too, as Wallace Stevens reminded us. What I am concerned with here, however, are the effects upon the imagination and craft of the novelist of a search that is both necessary and at the same time fruitless. To put it crudely: the artist cannot find his new experience without writing; and to write he must remember, thus mingling the new and the old in a marriage that obscures both. But if the reality sought remains stubbornly out of sight, the seeker, just as stubbornly, remains himself. He does not give up or turn back. This stubbornness of the seeker in his search leads to two complementary difficulties: the first has to do with the demands which the writer makes, or fails to make, of himself; the second, and more important, relates to the quality of his imagination and his craft.

"If one does not request," Norman Mailer wrote, in a brief criticism of Saul Bellow, "an apocalyptic possibility for literature, then I have been needlessly severe on Bellow, for his work does no obvious harm, but I think one must not be easy on an art which tries for less than it can manage. . . ." "Apocalyptic possibility." Things hidden since the foundation of the world. Mailer, who has as proprietary an air about the future as Ben Jonson had for the past, is extreme but also representative. He wants men in novels with "the lust to struggle with the history about them." His most recent book, *Advertisements for Myself,* is as good a summary of the difficulties of novel writing in America as I know. Mailer may be wrong, he may be muddle-headed, but he is never irrelevant; and if the conservatives ever get around to noticing him again they will no doubt accuse him of "growthmanship." The best piece in the book is his essay "The White Negro," and a few sentences from that essay will help to define the second difficulty the contemporary novelist has to deal with.

This has to do with the creation of character and with the author's notion of time. Discussing the language of Hip, Mailer writes that it is pictorial, ". . . but pictorial like non-objective art, imbued with the dialectic of small but intense change . . . for it takes the immediate experiences of any passing man and magnifies the dynamic

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of his movements, not specifically but abstractly so that he is seen more as a vector in a network of forces than as a static character in a crystallized field." Mailer argues that to create a new philosophy one must first create a new language; but since a new popular language does not present its philosophy overtly, Mailer goes on to reveal it. In his version, therefore, Hip cannot judge human nature according to any a priori standard, that is, a standard inherited from the past. Since the result of any action is unforeseeable, conventional moral responsibility is impossible. A vector in a network of forces, character is seen as perpetually ambivalent, moving in an absolute relativity "where there are no truths other than the isolated [and momentary?] truths of what each observer feels at each instant of his existence." I don't believe that Mailer's version of Hip is true of human nature—quite the contrary; but I am sure it is correct about what many think and feel and, moreover, want human nature to become. The Hipster has, in Mailer's words, a childlike adoration of the present. I think it more correct to say that he hates and fears the past. If you respect the past, Mailer says, you must also respect the concentration camps. That's just right, but not with affection. You respect concentration camps in the sense that you can say, "Yes, we did that and we must take the responsibility for it." It is important to remember that the most "bestial" of acts are committed by men, that is, our brothers, and not, as the language of some modern politics would have it, by "wolves" or "jackals."

But of even more relevance, from the point of view of the novel at least, is that this "adoration of the present," far from being an acceptance of time in all its flux, is an attempt to escape time, as if men were children, as if they could or should forget. Of course, every critical generality will do some violence to the art that is studied; but, that violence taken for granted, it is instructive to read these novels of the last several years with the notions outlined above in mind.

Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* avoids the major, and second, difficulty I mentioned by its avoidance of the first, the compulsion of the writer to make ultimate, or "apocalyptic," demands upon himself. Capote is rare in American letters: he is an excellent minor writer. This is not to say he should be dismissed. None of the writers who came into prominence after World War II can write a better sentence than Capote, and few have his meticulous devotion to the craft of writing. I mention Capote first because he is an exception to the kind of criticism I attempt here, an excellent example of the general rule that all criticism of art is at best a half-truth.

Paul Bowles is the oldest of these novelists (he was born in 1911), and in *The Spider's House*, his third book, he has written an international novel with very little resemblance to those of Henry James. In James's novels, the Americans and the Europeans may come to a recognition of their irreconciliability, but that very recognition always comes about after a serious, and often successful, attempt at intimacy. In Bowles's book the scene is Morocco, in Fez, and the most obvious impression is that the two Americans involved, John Stenham and Lee Veyron, are almost completely blind to what goes on before their eyes—despite, on Stenham's part at least, an intelligent and prolonged attempt to understand. But their blindness, their sheer outsiderness, is not complemented by a serious commitment to their own culture. Lee Veyron just "assumes" that all the backward or primitive peoples have seen what America, or the West, has and want it for themselves. Stenham, a writer (it helps him to get through the day to write), also sees what the natives want but knows that in getting it they will destroy the very old and dense culture that they have. Both of them, however, have characters like hangnails. They can't really like or live in America; they can't understand or sympathize with Fez: world-besotted travelers.

Bowles means to suggest this, I think. The key to the book is a young Moroccan boy, Amar, who meets Stenham and Veyron during the disturbance in Fez. Implicit in the creation of Amar is a condemnation of the West's preoccupation with history. Amar

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knows how to think, to feel, to pray. He is at home within the complicated ritual of his city and his religion, but his ritual is dying, being rejected by his own compatriots. At the end, even as Stenham and Veyron, Amar is caught up in, and left behind by, progress, by time. Enraged by the fatuous optimism of people like Lee Veyron, those mindless apostles of progress, Bowles resolves the old American tension in favor of despair. Time is always the destroyer, and since Bowles "knows" this from the beginning, his characters are lifeless.

Giovanni's Room by James Baldwin is quite another matter. This book is about a young American in Paris, on his way from a precarious bisexuality to complete homosexuality. That, however, should be qualified by Baldwin's own statement. He says of his hero: "David's dilemma is the dilemma of many men of his generation; by which I do not so much mean sexual ambivalence as a crucial lack of sexual authority."

That statement is extraordinarily pertinent since it catches precisely the tone of the story, a story told in a mirror by David, the young American who, in the absence of his girl Hella, entered into an intense erotic relationship with Giovanni. "I watch my reflection in the darkening gleam of the window pane," David says at the beginning —"says" rather than "writes" because David seems to be talking more to himself than to an audience. The events have happened and David recalls them. Although he is incapable of loving Hella, David does leave Giovanni when Hella returns from Spain. Giovanni drifts, becomes entwined among aging deviates and, at last, kills a former employer, for which he is about to be executed. Having fled to the south of France with Hella, David breaks with her and is about to return to Paris on the eve of Giovanni's execution. In the last chapter, he says: "I walk into the bedroom where the clothes I will wear are lying on the bed. . . . I begin to undress. There is a mirror in this room, a large mirror. I am terribly aware of the mirror." And later, in the same soliloquy: "And I look at my body, which is under sentence of death. . . . And I do not know what moves in this body, what this body is searching. It is trapped in my mirror as it is trapped in time and it hurries toward revelation." What revelation I cannot make out unless it be death, although David says that the key to his salvation, which cannot save his body, is hidden in his flesh. And trapped? I think so; for whatever heavy hope is suggested, the events recounted reveal only David's servitude to sensation, to time itself.

The appearance in 1957 of James Purdy's *Color of Darkness*, a collection of short stories and a short novel, *63 Dream Palace*, was one of the most encouraging events of the past decade. Purdy's second novel, *Malcolm*, was published last year, and while it revealed a more elegantly forceful prose than *63 Dream Palace*, I think the first novel is the better one. There is something stark, proud and strong about *63 Dream Palace* that *Malcolm* does not have, indeed does not attempt. The Dream Palace is the great woman's mansion, a scene of palatial desolation. But from this mansion, and within this desolation, one of the characters, who is "dead," that is almost without a memory, tries to, and does, tell the story of a boy he and the great woman knew. The story itself is desolate, but the telling of it redeems the subject. Anything is bearable, Isak Dinesen has written, if you put it in a story. Parkhearst Cratty, Purdy's exacerbated storyteller, remembers the story of Fenton Riddleway, and thereby makes it meaningful. Any intelligent man can write a criticism of life; it is the novelist's distinction to re-create it.

Ever since the appearance of William Styron's *The Long March*, one of the best novels of this decade, I had been waiting, with everyone else who is interested, for Styron's next book. *Set This House on Fire* is a surprise. The best way to explain my surprise is to say that, with the possible exception of Bowles, Styron is the most traditional of these novelists. Running more than five hundred pages, *Set This House on Fire* is a character study in depth of two men, Mason Flagg and Cass Kinsolving, narrated by a friend, Peter Leverett, who sets out, after the fact, to discover the reality

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Although much has been written about our way of life in the West, most people can only vaguely define our basic values, and little attention has been given to making these values explicit. In this book, Shepard Clough appraises Western man's basic values—those which "reflect in essence the choices which men have made . . . as to the way they live, the wants and desires they attempt to fulfill, and the order with which they strive to achieve recognized goals."

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The Dark Night of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

By Marshall Suther

In this book, Dr. Suther explains the unfulfilled promise of Coleridge. He discusses many influences on the poet, including his preoccupation with metaphysics, theology, and philosophy; his friendship with Wordsworth; his relations with women, and his addiction to opium. The author sees Coleridge as a towering genius on one hand, an ineffectual, even abject failure on the other, but above all engaged in a struggle to find himself. *$5.00*

The Cabinet and Congress

By Stephen Horn

A survey of the attempts which have been made since Washington's time to bring the Cabinet and Congress into closer rapport. The author evaluates both the advantages and the disadvantages of proposed reforms. He examines the reform issue historically and analytically, using contemporary manuscripts and documents, interviews, public opinion polls, and a questionnaire of his own devising. He also estimates the possibilities for future reform. *$6.00*

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behind the apparent suicide of Flagg and the murder of a young Italian girl whom Flagg had raped shortly before his death. The events are violent but less important to the burden of the book than the characters of Flagg and Kinsolving. As it turns out, Kinsolving killed Flagg; and the girl, although she was raped by Flagg, did not die by his hands, as had been given out, but by the village idiot. Part I is devoted to Flagg; Part II to Kinsolving, although of course both of them appear in each part. I said before that Styron was traditional, first because the characters take precedence over the events, and second because the very detail with which he imagines his characters implies a confidence in the ability, by sheer force of the imaginative power, to come to a knowledge of good and evil. There is nothing of the abstract in this book. Each scene is carefully built up and the sensations of the characters are enumerated, described, followed one by one with an eye (and ear) alert to every nuance. And at the end? At the end, one knows that this book is more about Cass Kinsolving than Mason Flagg, that it is his long agony, at the end of which, finally emerging from the demented weakness of drunkenness, he is saved from self-destruction by the ability to choose being rather than nothingness, the day-to-day ecstasy of being himself, not forever, but for a time. But not only that. Along with this choice is a vision of America Kinsolving has after a number of expatriate years in Europe. He wants to go back.

To be brief, *Set This House on Fire* is not the kind of book I expected from Styron; maybe I should say it is not the kind of book I wanted; but of its kind, it is very good, especially in the detail and thoroughness of characterization. Or rather, since I'm involved in this now and don't want to amend or take back, I think Cass Kinsolving should have been destroyed by Flagg. As Styron wrote it, Kinsolving blundered into salvation. I know that's the way it is; but it's not the way it should be. And that, as clear as I can make it, is my prejudice and my gripe.

At the beginning of this review, I made a terse generalization on man's inability to forget. I am not arguing for mere respect for the past, but a knowledge that the present, and everyone in it, has been made by the past. If history is a nightmare, then man himself is one, every man. So far as our novels are concerned, if they have not equalled the best of those published during an equal period of time after World War I, it may be because that generation did not have the same past to assimilate, that is, to imagine. Now if man is in and of time, it follows that he can be known and imagined only in time. And this means actions as well as words and the mere memory of actions, for if man cannot forget, neither can he fix his head on backward: he must remember without looking back. Men's actions, therefore, must be linked in time with their characters, and if something else is meant by "plot," I don't know what it is. And if the efforts of the writers I've referred to, and of several others not mentioned here, have not achieved greatness, then they have shown us where and how we must go and what we must avoid. I can think of only one or two works of nonfiction in this same period that have been as instructive or as amusing.

Brief Comments

THE FUTURE AS HISTORY: The Historic Currents of Our Time and the Direction in which They Are Taking America. By Robert L. Heilbroner. *Harper. $4.00.*

In this rewarding little book Mr. Heilbroner analyzes what has to be called heavily our contemporary Western, and in particular American, world view. Very briefly, he sketches the development of our inherited optimistic view of the course of human events as leading to an attainable universal happiness, contrasts the actual events, and the "forces" behind those events, of recent times with this optimistic expectation, and goes on to develop his own ideas as to our

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immediate future, and how we should meet, and *in a limited sense*, mold that future. He is no existentialist, no pessimist, and above all, does not urge that we abandon the Western rationalist tradition and its characteristic belief that we can "learn" from history; but he does insist that what we must learn from history nowadays is very different from what Condorcet, Herbert Spencer—and Marx-Engels—learned. He will have none of "historical inevitability," and in an interesting passage (p. 182) insists on the "co-existence of freedom and necessity in history." But the freedom in his opinion is relatively slight, even marginal. Right now, in 1960, we are not free to create in America, let alone throughout the world, the Utopia our fathers believed to be just around the corner. This is an interesting and very symptomatic book, at bottom an attempt to salvage, not to destroy, our democratic faith in progress, our democratic inheritance of cosmic optimism.

CRANE BRINTON

IDEAS IN CONFLICT: The Political Theories of the Contemporary World. By Edward McNall Burns. *Norton.* $9.25.

The chairman of the department of political science at Rutgers University sets forth in this book the major formulations of politics during the twentieth century. It has been an age, he believes, "unusually productive of political ideas"; and he threads his way through the richness of the material with quiet common sense and historical perspective. Mr. Burns describes himself as an optimist, in the sense that he believes in the "possibility of progress" and in the enduring validity of such values as tolerance and freedom. But he gives full scope in this study to those who represent the revolt against reason. The collection of studies (each effectively supplemented by notes and suggestions for further reading) is valuable because of the degree to which it focuses upon the writings of other than political scientists—including philosophers, economists, sociologists, psychologists and literary men.

There is an interesting concluding chapter on the challenge to political theory coming from the behaviorists and the deductive analysts, as well as from those who denounce the "mere historicism" of many surveys. The author keeps his own conviction that ideas are important in themselves, although closely related to the conditions of which they are born.

AUGUST HECKSCHER

THE END OF IDEOLOGY: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties. By Daniel Bell. *Free Press.* $7.50.

In this distinguished collection of essays, Daniel Bell explores a series of themes that have haunted American intellectuals for the past three decades: industrial work and its discontents, the unforeseen meliorations that have been possible within American capitalism, the failure of socialism in this country, the character of America as a "mass society." Unifying these themes is the author's conviction that by the 1950's American intellectuals' commitment to ideology, marked as it had been by the fervored use of ideas as weapons and the apocalyptic vision of revolutionary social change, was at an end.

This, he feels, is in some respects a loss. Without ideology today's intellectuals lack the *élan* that accompanies total emotional dedication. But the gains certainly outweigh this loss, since ideology has so often been the agent of totalitarian barbarism, and since the more prosaic commitment to piecemeal social change has produced unexpectedly satisfactory results.

A brilliant opening essay offers important supporting evidence for this conclusion. In it Mr. Bell makes a major attack on the theory of "mass society," which so many American intellectuals have used to prove that industrialization and equalitarianism in this country must be accompanied by increasing social disruption. Not only do these intellectuals assume increasing social disorganization in areas where it simply does not exist; they also, provincially, accept European patterns of thought that have no application to American conditions. Here one finds Mr. Bell both courageous and convincing.

ROBERT H. L. WHEELER

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PARTIES AND POLITICS IN AMERICA. By Clinton Rossiter. *Cornell University Press. $2.85.*

In this perceptive volume, based on the 1960 Senior Lectures at Cornell University, Professor Rossiter explains why the American party system, which so frequently defies all rational explanation of its workings, nevertheless works. In so doing, he indicates the fundamental relationship between our decentralized form of government and our politics with similar decentralization and localism. He treats broadly ten basic factors of American politics that influence our political behavior and determine political allegiance. Of these factors, he believes that class is the most important single political force, with the Republican party representing the upper and upper-middle classes, and the Democratic party the lower and lower-middle classes. He is careful to state, however, that class lines in America are blurred and that several divergent groups are joined together in unholy party wedlock.

Rossiter writes with authority both as a historian and political scientist. The book thus is an admirable synthesis of the history and contemporary features of the party system. It is realistic, readable and happily free from the lingo of the behavioral sciences. The witty diversities of our politics are portrayed with humor and understanding. "Parties," he maintains, "are useful, effective, and indispensable instruments of constitutional democracy." In the absence of war, he predicts that the pattern of American politics will not change, although more principle, discipline and responsibility are needed.

THOMAS S. BARCLAY

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE: The Presidential Image in the Campaign Biography. By William Burlie Brown. *Louisiana State University Press. $4.00.*

The author of this little book treats campaign biographies, beginning with 1824 and including 1960, more seriously than they deserve. He assumes plausibly that the biographers attributed to their subjects qualities likely to be approved in their times. He has examined divers social histories, listed in a bibliographical essay, in search of the identity of those approved qualities. Qualities the author discovered in the biographies are compared with those found in the histories and arranged into ten categories, including the Ancestry of the Candidates, the Parents of the Candidates, Making his Way, an Interlude of Martial Glory, the Candidate as Farmer, from the Law to the Market Place, Statesman, the Fireside Virtues.

This analytical approach makes it less easy to discover changes in the methods of later biographers that may have been due to the experience of their predecessors. One wonders whether as good results might have been achieved if the author had taken for granted that hurried writers were merely trying to set down selected, known facts that seemed likely at the time of writing to favor the ambitions of their subjects.

Such generalizations as Professor Brown ventures do not tend to support the soundness of his method. We learn, for example, under the category the Candidate as Farmer:

> As the tableau of the apprenticeship for statecraft unfolds, two dominant roles emerge. One is the traditional part bathed in the mellow glow of a worshipped past, the other belongs to an unchanging present. In the first, a bucolic idyl of republican virtue, the candidate appears in the guise of a sturdy yeoman; in the second, a real-life drama of world affairs, he plays the role of the persistent American folk hero—the successful businessman.

A reader may believe that the biographers of Clay, Buchanan and Douglas presented them "as latter day Benjamin Franklins making their homespun way about the tawdry glitter of European courts" and still lift an eyebrow when Andrew Jackson is said to have "turned down an appointment as minister to Mexico because he had no stomach for the trappings of the Court of Maximilian."

W. T. LAPRADE

THE STAGES OF ECONOMIC GROWTH: *A Non-Communist Manifesto.* By W. W. Rostow. *Cambridge University Press.* Hard cover, *$3.75*; paperback, *$1.45.*

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different countries through different periods, relating these developments to war and peace, political organization, and other social institutions and values. Although the main thesis is that all nations experience similar stages of economic growth from the "traditional society" through "take-off" to "maturity" and "high mass-consumption," only a few, including the United States, have as yet reached "high mass-consumption."

As the subtitle indicates, these developments do not follow the Communist schedule. Rostow is not so rigid in his assumptions as Marx and Lenin. He allows for variations in time periods and in details of the economies of different nations. Moreover, he recognizes the possibility of deliberate choice. The economy does not necessarily determine political and social structure; in some measure these shape the economy. Nor is high mass-consumption a final stage. He suggests that America shows signs of going on to a stage less influenced by the economy than earlier ones.

The book is well written and deals with world problems today. The author's outlook is optimistic, in that he believes that we can in part shape our own destinies. But one need not agree with him to find here some light on one's own thinking on these problems.

MABEL NEWCOMER

THE MEANING OF MODERN BUSINESS: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Large Corporate Enterprise. By Richard Eells. *Columbia University Press.* $7.50.

Richard Eells has added a valuable page to the study of economic organization and development as reflected in the growth of the modern corporation. He addresses himself to the problem of whether the large corporation will really serve society or whether society is being constructed to serve it.

How should a corporation be structured and what should be its proper role in society and in the economy? One view is that the corporation is created solely for the enhancement of the equity of its owners; another view holds that the corporation provides an economic organization that is properly concerned with the welfare of the whole man and the economic and noneconomic interests of the many conflicting groups within its influence sphere.

Eells has studied the pattern of change occurring within our society. He feels that a corporate structure useful and responsive to the needs of the society of the future should be developed within this process of socioeconomic change or "creative destruction." To this end, he proposes what he terms "the well-tempered corporation." This model would structure the corporation on the basis of economic, political and cultural environment, making it an entity not only for the best utilization of resources but also an entity that can accept its social responsibility.

This study is addressed to the social scientist and to the thoughtful businessman. I feel that this highly significant and creative research should be thoroughly studied by all thoughtful students of the economic, political, legal and social scene. It should be a must for teachers and students of business. The book is well written, superbly organized and is an outstanding contribution to the literature of this area.

JOHN SAGAN

THEORIES OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD: The Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century. By Ralph M. Blake, Curt J. Ducasse and Edward H. Madden. *University of Washington Press.* $6.50.

The pursuit of the "absolute truths" of science that intoxicated such great minds as DaVinci, Galileo, Descartes and Newton continues unabated today among rank-and-file scientists; but for some thinkers the apprehension has grown that such truths are really imitations, if not fraudulent, that their character is but poorly understood, and that indeed there may be no absolutes after all. This methodological trend provides the theme that ties together the thirteen studies contained in this book. Fortunately, the studies are essays *not* written for the specialist.

A word of caution is in order, however. The authors' concern with epistemological problems causes them to emphasize sci-

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entists' views during the period from the Middle Ages through the seventeenth century and then to emphasize philosophers' views during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the authors themselves admit, they subordinate history to the philosophy of science. The result is a provocative but unhistorical blurring of two genetically separate (although mutually influential) traditions: the understanding of scientific method by scientific investigators, and the understanding of scientific method by interested philosophers. Neither the history of science nor the philosophy of science nor the refinement of method *by scientists* through the centuries can be explained simply or largely by referring to the historically important men presented in this book. Nevertheless, it is an attractive and useful compendium that will quickly acquaint the reader with the exciting views of the nature of Nature and the nature of man's knowledge of Nature held by over two dozen scientists and philosophers of the first rank.

THOMAS M. SMITH

AFRICA TODAY—AND TOMORROW: An Outline of Basic Facts and Major Problems. By John Hatch. *Praeger. $4.00.*

Reviewing this competent little handbook by the Commonwealth Officer of the British Labour Party is a frustrating experience. Mr. Hatch's advice to the reader, as he ends his survey, to look at the problems of Africa "through the eyes of the Africans," is superb and cannot be said too often. And in general he tries himself to do just this: he sympathizes with the African approach to specific grievances like the Kenyan "White Highlands," and he sympathizes with their larger embitterment at the colonial episode overall.

But the proportions of the book are all out of kilter, for it is almost entirely devoted to the conferences, imbroglios, personalities and constitutional formalities that have been introducing Africa to the international political community in the past decade. Not until the final pages does Mr. Hatch briefly mention the terrible ravages of soil erosion throughout Africa, or the vulnerability of the "single-factor economies" of all African states—free as well as administered. And yet these are the *really* important things to understand about Africa, from the point of view of Africans who somehow have to live there.

One cannot criticize Mr. Hatch for being caught short by events; I know from personal experience how the swiftness of the African "emergence" upsets the best-laid plans of an author. For this reason *Africa Today—and Tomorrow* is not very pertinent to a few countries like the Congo, and also is badly outdated in a few statistical estimates like those for the populations of Nigeria and Kenya. But far more serious is Mr. Hatch's virtual omission of a discussion of the dimensions of population growth throughout Africa, and its devastating impact on her overstrained and off-balance social fabric. Dynamic and destabilizing social and economic processes like these are now surging up with appalling power. And what to do about controlling these patterns, rather than how to make picturesque African politicians comfortable in Lancaster House, is what we need to learn from good men like Mr. Hatch. Yet he fails us. He does not tell us how to sell the copper of the Congo and of Northern Rhodesia to an overstocked world market; or Ghana's cocoa; or Nigeria's oil; et cetera. He does not tell us how to absorb Africa's booming urban proletariats into steady industrial employment, or how to halt the collapse of Africa's frail agricultural base. He does not tell us how to tide the new leaders over these bread-and-butter crises, so that they can govern their people responsibly and progressively. Therefore, the reluctant judgment must be that Mr. Hatch's book does not tell us what we most urgently need to know about its field of study. It certainly does not tell us about "tomorrow."

PETER RITNER

ARISTOTLE. By John Herman Randall, Jr. *Columbia University Press. $5.00.*

"What on earth does Aristotle mean?" Professor Randall asks on Page 100 about a specific point. This question is general

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for many of us without technical training in philosophy who wish nevertheless to understand the relevance of Aristotle's thinking to our common problems. Mr. Randall evidences that he "has found great stimulus for his own thinking in Aristotle's careful analysis of language and communication against the broader context of his penetrating examination of processes, natural, living, and distinctively human—the processes which he sets off as those of human art." Out of Mr. Randall's philosophical training, almost from birth, his mastery of the voluminous scholarly works on Aristotle, and his innate sympathy with Aristotle, the author has here achieved a masterpiece of elucidation.

In differentiating Aristotle's thought from Plato's, Mr. Randall speaks of Aristotle's "going on" from Plato; there is "not so much a movement 'away from' Platonic notions as an addition to them, a putting of them in a broader factual context—with much necessary reconstruction to be sure."

After a remarkably lucid analysis of the details of Aristotle's writings, which rightly takes up most of the three hundred pages, Mr. Randall gives a brief summary of the "Aristotelianism" in Aristotle's works apart from his Platonic heritage. It is in the combination of these two strands that the author finds for himself and persuades us to find "the imaginative vision of truth."

WILLIAM TAEUSCH

MARTIN BUBER: Jewish Existentialist. By Malcolm L. Diamond. *Oxford University Press. $4.50.*

Dr. Diamond presents Martin Buber as "one of the wise men of our age" and his "philosophy of dialogue" as less concerned with philosophical problems than with "real questions . . . which engage the total person rather than the intellect alone." Buber's "Jewish existentialism" derives, in its existentialist aspect, from Nietzsche, Kierkegaard (largely by reaction) and German mysticism. Its Jewish aspect is primarily Hasidic; and Hasidism, writes Diamond, "which emphasized joyful worship of God in the here and now of this world and this life," transformed Buber "from a European intellectual, groping for Jewish roots, into a thinker whose cast of mind and deepest loyalty were indelibly Jewish."

Diamond's admiration of Buber as a wise man is more convincing than his presentation of Buber's existentialism. This is partly because of such a loose formulation of his claims as the following: "Buber employs criteria frequently, and his thought has more content than that of almost any other contemporary thinker, but neither the criteria nor the contents are objective." Fortunately, Diamond is usually more careful and often more critical than in this statement. He is most impressive when describing Buber in terms of his enthusiasm for work, love, faith, humor and courage, exemplifying the man of genuine piety in phrases which, he tells us, converted Buber into a disciple of Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism: "He shall seize the quality of eagerness with might, he shall rise eagerly from sleep. . . ."

JAMES GUTMANN

PSYCHOANALYSIS & AMERICAN LITERARY CRITICISM. By Louis Fraiberg. *Wayne State University Press. $5.95.*

It is questionable whether psychoanalysis qua psychoanalysis, as opposed to the use of the term as a label for the anxiety-determined introspectiveness of the present time, has, so far, had a profound influence on American literary criticism. Frequently the label, psychoanalysis, has been used to seem to explain or dignify observations, while the actual result has been the renaming of them without the introduction of any rigorous psychoanalytic theory or data. It is not unlike the vignette about Edna St. Vincent Millay's dog who, after a scolding, would drag her legs in a peculiar way. Edmund Wilson said, "They thought she was a case for Freud." Are American critics students of Freud or cases for him?

Professor Fraiberg inclines toward the latter view on the basis of his careful study of the writings of six American critics bearing on psychoanalysis. He concludes that the critics considered have, on the whole, not understood psychoanalysis for three reasons: (1) The early contributions of Freud

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received unfortunate first English translations. (2) The critics are confused about the crucial differences between classical or Freudian psychoanalytic ideas and those of a number of separate, actually non-psychoanalytic thinkers. (3) Having only read one group of Freud's early ideas and not having, naturally, kept up with the journals in this constantly evolving discipline, they are both out-dated and misinformed about the present state of psychoanalysis. The evolution of psychoanalysis might be compared in swiftness of change to the developments in nuclear bombs; it is a far more awe-inspiring and terrible weapon now than it was at the time that the Brill American translations appeared. A fourth reason should be added, that of the difficulty of understanding analysis without the benefit of immediate knowledge as psychoanalyst or patient. Einstein modestly and somewhat ironically acknowledged this in a letter about Freud's *Moses and Monotheism,* saying, "I have always regretted that for a non-expert, who has no experience with patients, it is hardly possible to form a judgment about the finality of the conclusions in your writings. But after all this is so with all scientific achievements." Without such experience a critic might explain the Millay dog's troubles brilliantly or foolishly, but probably not on a level of serious psychoanalytic understanding.

The critics discussed are of the older generation, and it may well be that younger ones, together with a few perceptive psychoanalysts now making contributions to criticism, will prove to have a more firm comprehension of the usefulness of psychoanalysis in criticism. Professor Fraiberg, whose book demonstrates an extremely well-informed and temperate view of psychoanalysis, is a case in point. His summary of psychoanalytic ideas, as well as his discussion of the writings of several psychoanalysts on artistic themes, is an excellent primer for critics. These essays are perhaps the first extended attempt to dissect the relationship of psychoanalysis and literary criticism. They constitute an acute, important and rewarding achievement.

SIDNEY L. WERKMAN, M.D.

ESSAYS, LETTERS, AND REVIEWS BY MATTHEW ARNOLD. Collected and edited by Fraser Neiman. *Harvard University Press. $9.00.*

SELECTED JOURNALISM FROM THE ENGLISH REVIEWS BY STENDHAL WITH TRANSLATIONS OF OTHER CRITICAL WRITINGS. Edited and with an Introduction by Geoffrey Strickland. *Grove. $6.00.*

Shaw was right to say that all great art is journalism. We know what he meant when we think of *Gulliver's Travels, The Divine Comedy* and *Bouvard and Pécuchet.* But he should have added that this sort of journalism calls for a journeyman of heroic dimensions. The plain converse is of course fallacious: no one needs to be told that journalism is not great art. Yet journalism by great minds frequently deserves to survive its day.

We have two examples of this truth in a pair of recently published books. *Essays, Letters, and Reviews by Matthew Arnold,* collected and edited by Fraser Neiman, is an impressive volume of four hundred pages one is glad to own, to read and to go back to. The editing is, in the first place, superb, so that the reader has without effort all he needs to know in order to follow Arnold's polemical, witty and allusive intellect.

The subjects, as one would expect, are diverse. There is much on education, that bane of modern social thought; there are reviews and appreciations—of Sainte-Beuve, Renan, Theodore Parker, De Maistre and Curtius the historian of Greece; there is much that I found instructive and penetrating on the Church and Irish Questions and on the English liberalism of a hundred years ago. And there is the usual scattering of shorter pieces, often strongly characteristic, such as Arnold's speech on his Retirement or his response to a "Toast to Literature."

Some of Arnold's best prose and best thought occur in these happily rescued pages, and one understands why he has survived changes of fashion, although a critic. One understands also why he infuriated his contemporaries. On current issues

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in particular he can mix a brew of condescending arrogance, elaborate humor and solemn self-regard that to this day inspire thoughts of violence. What is so maddening is the suspicion that he goes into these gyrations in order to charm and disarm. But how good he is when in stride!—and how good his editor, whose notes so deftly include such sidelights on the era as the case of the Rev. Mr. Jackson, who was "suspended for five years" on a charge of "systematic indecency, culminating in rape."

The merit of *Selected Journalism from the English Reviews by Stendhal* is of another kind. Stendhal is a greater genius than Arnold and a less accountable mind. He darts and kills his prey, or else misses altogether, leaving us with puzzling detail or dull iteration of what sounds dangerously like a crank's *idée fixe*. Mr. Geoffrey Strickland has chosen well from *The London Magazine, The Athenaeum* and *The Paris Monthly Review*. His researches yield five substantial sections on Poetry and the Novel, Music and the Theatre, the Current of Ideas, Politics and Society, and some memoirs of Byron.

Where Stendhal shines is in his fused perception of literature and reality. Give him a novel and he thinks like a politician; show him an Italian despotism and he talks like a cultural critic.

Stendhal is the editor's ideal of a book reviewer—all his reviews are short, lively, definitive. What the authors felt is another question, but we, picking up these fugitives a century and a quarter after the pot had ceased to boil, recapture the whole era for the mere effort of jumping with the critic's wit. Nor is the subject matter always ephemeral: here is Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe* gingerly handled by a rival hairsplitter in the psychology of love, Chateaubriand and Lamartine deflated with kid gloves, Byron misremembered to good and truthful effect, Rossini and Kant, Helvétius and the Paris actors, Napoleon's generals and Censorship, Corneille and Walter Scott: it is a marvelous running conversation, far less devious than the Diaries—conversation such as made the author himself welcome in places where he was also a little despised and greatly feared.

What one learns also from this collection is that translations from the French were as bad in Stendhal's time as in ours. Mr. Strickland apologizes for the stilted tone of some passages of Regency English and for many gallicisms: he is quite right, but why does he fall into the same errors in the few articles he himself translates? I could fill a page of standard errors, so to speak, from all these misrepresenters indiscriminately. I content myself with reasserting that *emphase* does not mean "emphasis"—not in Stendhal, nowhere, not ever.

JACQUES BARZUN

JOSEPH CONRAD: A Critical Biography. By Jocelyn Baines. *McGraw-Hill. $8.50.*

The particular virtue of this new biography is its admirable documentation. Mr. Baines has examined every original scrap of paper connected with Conrad and relates his life with scrupulous accuracy. He discovers among other things that the duel Conrad is supposed to have fought as a youth in Marseilles was probably an attempt at suicide, and that a few years later Conrad extracted ten pounds from his uncle-guardian by a bald-faced lie. Baines does not essentially alter Jean-Aubry's official (and woodenly idolatrous) *Life and Letters*, but his supporting apparatus is fresher and weightier.

He is less satisfactory with Conrad as a man and totally unsatisfactory in his discussion of the novels. As a psychologist he is helpless before the contradictory elements of Conrad's character, and contents himself with summarizing them in catalogue fashion. As a critic he is so anxious to take Conrad on straightforward terms, and so eager to refute the symbol hunters and Freudian pearl divers, that his analyses prove relentlessly banal. Conrad as a treasure house of subsumed psychic meanings has been pushed to a tortured extreme, but Baines's cautious and uninspired superficiality is no corrective.

His book, valuable as a factual biography, is useless as a critical one.

LEO GURKO

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THE DANDY: Brummell to Beerbohm. By Ellen Moers. *Viking. $6.00.*

Judging from the title and the dust jacket alone, one would imagine that here is a lively, entertaining, but probably inconsequential, bit of light summer reading. The fact is much better. By giving up just a little of the hoped-for entertainment, one gets in exchange a scholarly and judicious study of the nineteenth-century "fashionable" novel in England and France, blended with biographies of notable dandies, a class of men whose elevated noses have now entirely sunk beneath the rising tide of the Common Man.

Miss Moers begins the biographical part of her study with Brummell, whose most notable contribution to literature appears to be that not very formidable crack, "Do you call that *thing* a coat?" The literary part begins with Bulwer and Disraeli, whom Sir Edmund Gosse spotted some years back as inaugurators. "These two," Sir Edmund wrote, "the author of *Pelham* and the author of *Vivian Grey*, raced neck and neck at the head of the vast horde of 'fashionable' novel-writers, now all but them forgotten." Not any longer, thanks to Miss Moers.

It is a melancholy story really, for in these pale, posturing dandies we see the last, decadent manifestations of a great tradition, the tradition of superiority, of aristocracy, of, in short, the Gentleman. It is hard to see anything of the Chevalier Bayard, or of Sidney, or of Castiglione's Courtier, or of Spenser's Arthur (to go back no further) in Eugène Sue and Oscar Wilde; but the line of descent (the *mot juste*) is quite clear. Quite properly Miss Moers ends her book with Max Beerbohm, who, although the last of the line, escaped much of the decadence and retained something of the brilliance. The Incomparable Max might be speaking of himself when he describes "a now extinct species, a lost relic . . . a leisurely personage, attired with great elaboration, on his way to one of his many clubs. . . ."

CALVIN D. LINTON

INTERVAL OF FREEDOM: Soviet Literature During the Thaw, 1954-1957. By George Gibian. *University of Minnesota Press. $4.25.*

In this slim volume Professor Gibian has provided the nonspecialist with a balanced, clear and readable exposition of the main lines of literary protest in the Soviet Union between 1954 and 1957, when writers were permitted a somewhat greater freedom to express themselves.

The author begins with a general literary survey of this period within the context of events that preceded and followed it, and then goes on to examine the literature of this interlude in more detail, showing how the complaints were focused on abuses in science and technology, on rigid official attitudes toward sex, love and family life, and on the ever-present timeservers. A brief chapter is also devoted to an outline of the *Doctor Zhivago* episode.

Of particular interest to the reader will be two characteristics of the Soviet scene that are repeatedly reflected in this literature of the Thaw. One of these is the continuing drive for an assertion of more individuality in both private and professional life. The other is the social-economic stratification that has produced a deep cleavage between the ordinary people and the administrative elite.

PETER RUDY

THE POEM ITSELF: 45 Modern Poets in a New Presentation. Edited, and with an Introduction, by Stanley Burnshaw; associate editors, Dudley Fitts, Henri Peyre, John Frederick Nims. *Holt, Rinehart and Winston. $6.50.*

Reading some translation of a poem you love, you are more conscious of the translator's additions and omissions than you are of the poem itself. Why not get rid of the translator's additions by getting rid of the translator, by substituting for that faithless verse a "rendering" in literal prose? Why not restore the translator's omissions by having someone tell the reader, in an "interpretative discussion," just what it was the translator had to omit? In *The Poem Itself*, Stanley Burnshaw, Dudley Fitts, Henri Peyre, John F. Nims and a dozen

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RANDALL JARRELL

THE SUMMER ANNIVERSARIES: The Lamont Poetry Selection for 1959. By Donald Justice. *Wesleyan University Press.* Hard cover, *$3.00*; paperback, *$1.65*.

The chief subject of Mr. Justice's poems is the journey from innocence to experience, the Fall, domestically reflected most often in reminiscences of childhood, that strange, lost land about which there is nevertheless "something familiar." The first seven poems, for instance, vary this subject, while the eighth makes explicit what has been happening by being about the expulsion from Eden. A couple more relate the same movement to unhappy love affairs; others extend the idea of the Fall across the generations, speaking of the decay of families, houses, life styles; while the last poem in the book sums up and generalizes these journeys in another famous fall, being a prayer "To Satan in Heaven."

Mr. Justice is an accomplished writer, whose skill is consistently subordinated to an attitude at once serious and unpretentious. Although his manner is not yet fully disengaged from that of certain modern masters, whom he occasionally echoes, his own way of doing things does in general come through, a voice distinct although very quiet, in poems that are delicate and brave among their nostalgias. Of several whose melancholy lucidity moved me and will remain in memory, I mention especially "Beyond the Hunting Woods."

HOWARD NEMEROV

ART AND ILLUSION: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. By E. H. Gombrich. Bollingen Series XXXV • 5, *Pantheon Books. $10.00.*

This book is an expanded version of the excellent A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts that Professor Gombrich presented in Washington in the spring of 1956. The question explored is modestly stated to be that of why different nations and different ages have represented the visible world in so many different ways.

The confirmed modernist in the arts, who would dismiss such a subject as representation as unworthy of attention, or who would accuse Professor Gombrich of being a fussy old scholar who is fighting a rear-guard action in the battle for art as imitation, would be most mistaken about this book. The author is interested in the broad topics of the psychology of vision and the function of art as a language of communication. He is combatting the error of those who think that the realistic painter records exactly what he sees and that there is only one realistic way to paint. He wishes to show that one does not just paint what one sees but that one begins with the materials of paint and the manners of painting before him. In this way the author makes the subject of artistic representation a topic in the analysis of styles.

The book skillfully brings together the approaches of the psychology of learning and the theories of information and communication. It emphasizes that the spectator is constantly using his power of interpretation, collaborating with the artist to transform visual schemata into meaningful shapes and pictorial effects. Chapters on abstraction, caricature and expression not only highlight this thesis but suggest that as art turns from the visible world it comes upon an uncharted region waiting to be articulated.

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CHARLES E. GAUSS

THE LIFE OF MICHELANGELO. By Charles H. Morgan. *Reynal. $6.00.*

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that this book is "the first major biography in nearly seventy years" of Michelangelo is contradicted by Dr. Morgan's bibliography which, although selective, lists quite a number of recent works on this Renaissance genius, the present volume is very welcome. The author treats his subject with all due reverence, refraining from wild speculations and suggestions to fill in gaps in the contemporary reports of Condivi and Vasari, or whenever no further clues are offered by the master's own letters, poems and recorded conversations.

Unlike several current pretentious publications, in which a very brief and, inevitably, superficial essay precedes a treasury of large plates, here the emphasis is reversed. A text of nearly two hundred and fifty pages is followed by more than sixty modest black-and-white plates, some of them very small, yet always large and clear enough to illuminate the scholarly comments made by the author. Paintings, sculptures and edifices by Renaissance colleagues are often, for the sake of comparison, juxtaposed to works by Michelangelo himself, and significant details of both the Medici Chapel in Florence and the Sistine Chapel in Rome are also shown.

Dr. Morgan succeeds in giving us what seems to be a true-to-life picture of the warm-hearted yet lonely, self-assertive yet deeply religious giant that was Michelangelo, even though the focus fortunately is on his achievements rather than on his puzzling psyche. He sums up Michelangelo's basic problem by saying that "how to translate eternal strength without losing the sense of the strength of the Eternal provided the whetstone for his genius." If the volume adds little to the spectacular amount of knowledge gathered so far by specialists (in particular Charles de Tolnay), it can be recommended as an earnest and readable account of a great man and a great age.

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THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*
—EDITOR

As I had the privilege of chairing the symposium at which Mr. Hyman first presented his paper entitled "A Critical Look at Psychology" [AS: Winter, 1959-60], it seems fitting that I should reply to the criticism that its publication has aroused. I should like to say at the start that I do not agree with all of Mr. Hyman's points, that I suggested some corrections when he showed me his paper, and that he refused them all. However, I cannot say that I found his refusal to listen to psychological reason particularly disconcerting. It seemed consistent with the intent of his essay. I now feel quite content that Mr. Hyman had his way and that his paper was printed as it had been read. His misapprehensions do not detract from the contribution his paper made to our symposium. For his job was not to present the psychologists' psychology, but rather the view of an outsider familiar with larger and more enduring perspectives of conduct than psychologists are usually concerned with; yet an outsider who has obviously been exposed to a good deal of psychology and sufficiently attracted by it to reflect critically on his experience.

I should now like to respond to some points in Mr. R. K. McKelvey's and Mr. H. London's letters [AS: Summer, 1960]. I hope it will be acceptable to them if I address myself to the issues they raised in a general way, with only a few specific references to their comments. I cannot reply to Mr. Rosengren's letter, in the same issue, as I did not sufficiently understand what he has in mind.

I think the aim of Mr. Hyman's essay is to assess psychology from the universalist viewpoint of a humanist. Insofar as psychologists are aware that non-psychologists also have been concerned with the human condition for some time, they are prone to high-hat them. Psychologists are, for instance, unrestrained in their scorn of the fuddy-duddy ways of the humanities. Yet they show a marked irritability when someone who is not an accredited member of the profession has the temerity to hold views about their endeavor.

I agree with Mr. McKelvey that it must distress a psychologist when he is blamed for the charismatic assurance of our medical colleagues. Mr. Hyman has thrown us all into one pot. This is not correct so far as academic training, degree and professional identity are concerned. It is much more correct when the public image of psychology is considered. For the public psychology and psychiatry are essentially one, and it will not do to dismiss this notion simply as the result of ignorance. An observer from a distance may perceive contours which those much closer to them have long missed. At any rate "the mainstream of American psychology" appears to be representative of psychology's concern with itself rather than of the meaning and promise that it may have in the culture at large. The two men whom Mr. McKelvey recognized as members of the professional organization of psychologists are certainly not typical of the abiding concerns of American psychology. They, as well as certain others to whom he conceded only a limited influence, may have contributed more to the scope of psychology than its present mainstream is willing to admit. Yet scientific psychology still drags its feet when it comes to acknowledging the contribution of Sigmund Freud, and for this occasion has designed a whole register of reservations garnished with lackadaisical and condescending praise.

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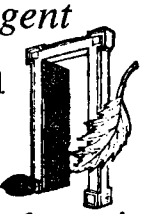

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that they talk, as a rule, only to other social scientists. There is no need here for a defense of the autonomy of a scientific discipline. Obviously, specialists must communicate with other specialists about particulars in order to approach the larger aims of their subject through minute, but cumulative, steps. This does not mean, however, that they should not also address themselves to the greater cultural community of which they are a part; nor will they advance their subject when they put its larger aims under wraps (Temporarily Closed Because of Unforeseen Technical Difficulties) and make the minutiae the be-all and end-all of their science.

Ours is a more esoteric pride than the one for which Mr. Hyman blamed us and the medical people collectively—that of the special scientific fitness of psychologists. There is some reason to think that psychologists are, by and large, better prepared for the systematic study of conduct than other disciplines. Their liability lies in the self-restricting dogmatism into which the very idea of scientific rigor is so often distorted. When psychologists assert their own scientific charisma they thump at the accomplishment of having made the study of behavior into a quantitative science: for this alone will accredit it to that lofty title. Measurement is an article of faith for most of present-day psychology. The puzzle remains why, of all things, the assertion of scientific rigor should rest on faith rather than on proof.

I know of no demonstration that measurement is equally compelling for all sciences, or that the degree of quantification, as Poincaré put it a little glibly, determines to what degree a discipline is scientific. Potent methods will at times extend the scope of a science. In principle, the *aims* of a discipline will have to determine *what method* will serve it best. Taxonomy has been useful for zoology and botany, but it seems to offer little to physics. It is far from self-evident that measurement should apply to psychology in the same manner as it applies to physics; but it is positively confounding, once physics has been made into the scientific model for psychology,

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why the enormous scope of theoretical reflection in the former should have nothing to suggest to the latter.

The counterpoise of mechanism and vitalism as such may not be of much use anymore, as Mr. London says. However, psychologists could do worse than attend more "sophomore philosophy of science courses." It might forewarn them that the reluctance to bother with the logical and epistemological premises of quantification may bring about the appearance of a science rather than its reality. The late Professor Thorndike said: "Everything that exists, exists in some quantity and can therefore be measured." (I am quoting from memory but, I hope, have rendered the intent of his proposition accurately.) It sounds self-evident until you begin to wonder what *quantity* means. The trusted inches and ounces? And which quantity? That indigenous to the phenomena, or that which we impose pragmatically and abandon when it brings no return? Is it implied that all kinds of quantity can be measured? But what is the profit of the formal—I should like to say *ceremonial*—use of mathematical procedure when qualities have to be warped while they are being translated into quantities? At which point we are back to the question of appearance and reality.

I don't think Mr. Hyman had any intention to "embarrass psychology by hurling epithets at it." At least I do not remember that anybody in the discussion said anything to that effect. If psychology were a person, we would call it a sign of grave insecurity that she perceives criticism as a hostile act when it was evidently not so intended. Something in you must be apprehensive, we would say, that the hostility is deserved; so you attack yourself when you blame an imaginary enemy for attacking you. The fact of the matter is that it would not be particularly difficult to demonstrate more than one "specific error" in the approaches of modern psychology. One of them is to insist on reductionism at the cost of dealing, in the end, not with real conduct and real experience but with experimental artifacts in a noumenal chess game. Another mistake lies exactly in the pro-

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nounced inclination of psychology to forget or deny ". . . that it is well-nigh impossible to isolate the effects of a few [variables] while assuming that the rest are of *no consequence in the experiment at* hand," when the realization of Mr. London's point would make it necessary to subject the methodological commitments of psychology to stringent review. *If* the method had the utility that it pleads, it should by now have led to a vastly greater stock of secure knowledge than is at our disposal. The thought cannot be hushed that the method may be more of a collective ritual and somewhat less of a pragmatic boon than is apparent. At any rate, while the matter is being clarified we might cut our losses and not reject it out of hand when an observer from another discipline tells us how ours looks to him. We might even apply something of our celebrated scientific rationality and learn from it.

FREDERICK WYATT
Director, Psychological Clinic
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

(Inasmuch as these comments from Mr. Wyatt are in reply to a collection of letters dealing with the article under discussion, the Editors have chosen to waive the usual space restrictions.)

* * *

I ask permission to contest one statement made by Louis Simpson in his recent review of my *39 Poems* [AS: Summer, 1960]. He cites the lines:

> O angels and attendants past the world
> what shall the sleeps of heaven dream but time?

And adds: "This is the conclusion of a poem, and it means nothing."

I have no choice but to believe it is a reasonably clear statement and that, especially in the context of the poem, its meaning is both clear and exactly right.

The poem describes the rather gross sleep of overfed uncles after a Thanksgiving dinner ("O apes and hairy uncles of us all"). It presents a houseful of them at a family reunion, all heaped on the couches, snoring

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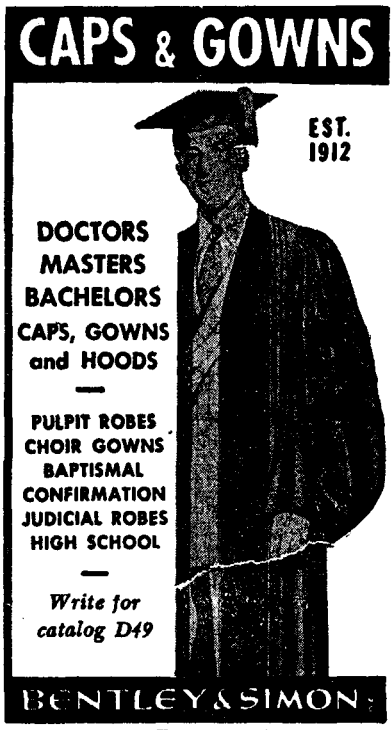

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off their dinner and dreaming the torpid dreams of a bloated stomach. They dream to animal-heavens of the gut.

They are not pretty, but they are one part of what time is, and I try in the poem to speak them in love, even with their obvious grossness upon them. I mean the context of the poem to say "this is the world, and the only one there is to love, though clearly it is not much."

Once past the world, where there is no time, what shall the angels and attendants there dream, but of being back in the world again? Maybe there are no dreams in heaven, but if there are, what shall they be about except of time in the world? I submit that that is not a meaningless statement.

I do not contest Mr. Simpson's right to damn my poems, but I may fairly insist on being damned for my own sins.

JOHN CIARDI
Metuchen, New Jersey

* * *

The letter of Mr. Bereday [AS: Summer, 1960], commenting on my article in the Autumn, 1959, issue, bears out my contention.

He declares, "To an individualist there is no such thing as a mass, far less a swinish one." He can look upon a lynching mob or a Ku-Klux parade, he can read of Hitler's hypnotic triumphs at Nürnberg, and even of that roar in the streets of ancient Jerusalem, "Release unto us Barabbas!" and still be unable to believe that there is such a thing as a swinish mass.

So can a great many American intellectuals; and that is one thing wrong with the country.

GERALD W. JOHNSON
Baltimore, Maryland

* * *

Perhaps we all should affirm Mr. Krutch's remarks about ourselves in "our" world; but, if you don't mind my asking, what if we cannot?

It is somewhat difficult to determine the tone of Mr. Krutch's comments in the Summer issue. Certainly he advises sincerely; yet I cannot help sensing that the mature

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Mr. Krutch is a trifle beyond being able to realize the problem. His voice reaches us from a distance, and by the time it arrives it seems weak, almost futile. If Polonius were not *so* typical I wonder what we would hear?

Not that Mr. Krutch's words are not appreciated; they merely provoke the response, So what? And asking why this is the response apparently doesn't get us anywhere either.

If thousands feel that the most gratifying act is to disrupt, and if in the process they disrupt not only "society" but themselves too, how can one even sincerely ask for honor or self-importance? The words must seem superfluous.

Since we still want to listen to our educators, and even if we can listen with only half an ear, Mr. Krutch should not feel that youth laughs entirely irresponsibly. Yet if our scholars want our complete attention they must offer us something new, stimulating and adventurous. Until then they would be foolish to respond to chaotic youth with any more than a disinterested shrug, an uh-huh. They might even find us amusing.

STEPHEN A. SBARGE
Student, Columbia University
New York, New York

* * *

Mr. Lerner's essay on "Economics and the Control of Man" [AS: Summer, 1960] contains so many stimulating ideas, ranging from the philosophical to the eminently practical—the two often coincide—that one hopes he will find time to expand them in book form. Here I should like to comment on only one aspect of his essay—the phenomenon of what he calls "seller's inflation," and the danger of not coping with this type of inflation, or of trying to cope with it, but with essentially inappropriate measures.

The phenomenon of "seller's inflation" has been described by Gardiner C. Means, who names it "administrative inflation," as a process in which "pressures from business to expand profit margins and pressures from labor to increase wages faster than the increase in national productivity . . . increase prices even without an excess in demand or even with a deficiency in demand." It is curious to note in passing that some years ago when J. K. Galbraith came forth with his widely acclaimed and also widely criticized concept of "countervailing power" (referring to the reciprocally stabilizing effect in the economy of large business entities and large labor unions interacting on one another), he made no mention of this unwelcome by-product. Administrative inflation now turns out to be the very antithesis of his concept, which appears to have lost any validity whatsoever.

The existence of administrative inflation does pose a serious problem for the so-called free-enterprise economy. To provide a constructive solution for it requires, in my view, a conscious return to legal (and economic) restraints for the sake of genuine freedom. In accepting such restraints, we would be returning to the thinking of the preclassical era of economists, where was developed, as Lerner puts it, "the rule of law that gave security of property and the freedom of individuals to move and trade." In practical terms, what we would have then would be a marriage between conservatism and progress. Such a marriage would indeed form an attractive platform for political action, worthy of support not only of latter-day *political economists* but of all truly liberal-minded persons.

OTTO R. REISCHER
Washington, D. C.

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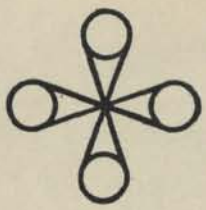

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